

News

## UN expert on human rights asks Spanish Government to lift Catalan autonomy's suspension



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Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, independent expert from the UN. Photo: Wikipedia.



UN Logo: Image: Wikimedia Commons.



According the expert opinion, self-determination is a fundamental human right that the international community should help implement. Photo: Australian Human Rights Comission, Flickr.

Alfred de Zayas has called on Spanish authorities to negotiate with Catalan leaders. He has criticised in his own words the retrogression in human rights protection after the measures taken.

[UN](#) independent expert on human rights **Alfred de Zayas** has asked Spanish government to lift the **suspension of Catalonia's autonomy**, prevailing since the implementation of the [155 article from the Constitution](#), started on October the 26<sup>th</sup>. De Zayas has called on Spanish authorities to enter into negotiations with Catalan leaders and has condemned the decision branding it as "retrogression in human rights protection", incompatible with articles 1, 19, 25 and 25 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR).

Alfred de Zayas is an acknowledged international expert from UN looking after **human rights** issues. He has criticised Brussels for his silence in the conflict between Catalonia and the Spanish Government. American lawyer, with roots from Cuba, de Zayas has collaborated with the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#). "Denying a people the right to express themselves on the issue of **self-determination**, denying the legality of a referendum, using force to prevent the holding of a referendum and cancelling the limited autonomy of a people by way of punishment constitutes a violation of Article 1 of the ICCPR and of the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)".

De Zayas has insisted on the importance of addressing the aspiration of people to self-determination as a conflict prevention measure, "as is evidenced by the countless wars that have occurred since 1945 that found their origin in denial of self-determination". The human rights expert has also stated that Spanish authorities seem to invoke the principle of territorial integrity to justify forceful attempts to silence political dissent and aspirations of self-determination.

"Of course, there are many people worldwide who aspire to self-determination, whether internal in the form of autonomy or external in the form of independence", reminded de Zayas. "It is a fundamental human right that the international community should help implement", added. According to an article published by the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), the right of self-determination is a right of people and not a prerogative of States to grant or deny.

The American lawyer, judgmental with the measures implemented by the Spanish Government, shared all these statements on Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup>. According to his opinion, the only democratic solution to the current impasse is to suspend "repressive measures" and to organize a referendum monitored by the [EU](#), [OSCE](#) and private observers including the [Carter Center](#).

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