

News

How the non-profit world has reacted to the events of the referendum in Catalonia?



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Author: Rubén Escobar (iWith.org) / Translation from Catalan: Rocio Florencio



Peaceful demonstration against Spanish police. Photo: Twitter.



Kartik Raj, researcher from Human Rights Watch sent to Catalonia. Photo: Twitter.



Spanish security corps using force to stop the referendum. Photo: Twitter.

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Amnesty International Logo. Picture: AI.

Human rights and peace organisations condemn the violence and repression committed by the Spanish security corps during the referendum.

The events of [1st October in Catalonia](#) have left no foreign observer indifferent, let alone the charitable organisations. Last Sunday was marked by the acts of violence committed by the Spanish national police and civil guards in order to stop the **self-determination referendum in Catalonia**. In this regard, the non-profit sector organisations have mainly taken a stance against violence and in favour of finding a peaceful solution. A good example of this is [Kartik Raj, Human Rights Watch](#) researcher, who tweeted that same Sunday demanding the Spanish authorities to respect the **freedom of speech and assembly**, and to stop the excessive use of force. In the same way, the NGO has taken a stance after examining the hundreds of videos showing the **use excessive force** from the Spanish Police and has concluded that the violence was disproportionate.

[Amnesty International](#) has already taken a stance. In a statement issued on 3rd October, they confirmed that members of the Police's Intervention Unit (UIP) had used excessive and disproportionate force against people resisting passively on the streets and at the doors of the polling stations. Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia director, [John Dalhuisen](#), has stated that, during the referendum day, there was a "dangerous use of riot control equipment, injuring hundreds of peaceful protesters". According to the [Health's Department from Catalonia](#), **893 people were injured**.

A delegation from Amnesty worked on the ground from 5 am to document the events happening in Catalonia about the referendum. For their part, [Oxfam Intermón](#), has also condemned the situation of **repression and violence present in Catalonia** through a statement on their webpage. "We want to show our solidarity with the people who have been beaten or injured throughout the day", they stated. Also, they have demanded the end to any kind of violent behaviour and they have made a plea to the people to remain peaceful. Likewise, a state platform made up by social organisations and networks on international cooperation, global citizenship education and humanitarian action, the [Coordination of NGOs in Spain](#), have condemned the excessive force used against the "defenceless people of Catalonia".

In the same way, they have supported the petition submitted by the [UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner](#), demanding an impartial investigation about the events. The High Commissioner, [Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein](#), has publicly rejected the police action last Sunday. "I'm very saddened by the violence in Catalonia. Hundreds having been injured, I urge the Spanish authorities to guarantee an impartial and independent investigation on every violent act committed", the statement said.

In Catalonia, many organisations, such as the [Coordinadora d'ONGD i altres Moviments Solidaris](#) from Lleida or [Lafede.cat](#), have also taken a stance. The Coordinadora has denounced the "brutal and disproportionate repression endured by the Catalanian population in exercising the right of expressing their opinions". For this reason, they have cancelled every activity planned for the week and have joined the **general strike called on the 3rd October**. Its counterpart in Girona, the [Coordinadora d'ONG Solidàries](#), and more specifically the organisations that make it up, have also "forcefully denounced the brutal and disproportional violence". "What we went through yesterday in Catalonia is an atrocity plotted by the Spanish government, a resourceless institution, allergic to dialogue, that places the use of force before politics", they add in the statement.

Along these lines, Lafede.cat, part of the **#SomDefensores Network**, has denounced "each and every one of the violation of rights committed against the Catalanian population before and during the 1st October" and has also joined the general strike. The network made up by human rights organisations and groups of lawyers immediately presented a first manifest about human rights violations to which anybody can agree on in this link. Other organisations, like [Fundipau](#), [Justícia i Pau](#) or [SETEM Catalunya](#), have also joined the strike and have denounced Sunday's police brutality.

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