



Mdm. Gabriela Cuevas Barron,
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
GENEVA

Reykjavík 21st October 2019

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Dear Mdm. President.

I write you this letter to raise my concerns about the situation in Catalonia following the verdict of the Spanish Supreme Court, sentencing 9 Catalan politicians to jail; including Mdm. Carme Forcadell, former President of the Parliament of Catalonia.

I am of course aware that Catalonia is not a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, but currently an integral part of its member state Spain. Nevertheless, I want to express my worries and underline my position that elected representatives, irrespective of national or regional parliaments, are entitled to the right of practicing democracy and parliamentary debate.

The lengthy detention of Mdm. Forcadell in the period pending trial was of great concern to me, not least bearing in mind the principle of arrested or detained "entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release pending trial", as firmly laid out in Article 5 of The European Convention of Human Rights. The recent verdict of the Spanish Supreme Court of 11 and a half years imprisonment of the former President of the Parliament of Catalonia is also a reason for concern.

It is my sincere hope that the situation in Catalonia can be resolved by political, democratic and peaceful means in lines with the initial goal of the Inter-Parliamentary Union of "promoting peace through parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue".

I considered it urgent to state my points of view and raise your awareness of the grave situation, causing unrest and violence as a result of the imprisonment of the former President of the Parliament of Catalonia and other Catalan political leaders.

Mdm. President, I convey my sincere wishes for your continued success in your important work.

Steingrímur J. Sigfússon
Speaker of Alþingi, Parliament of Iceland