

Beat: Politics

The conservative Spanish Popular Party, on the ropes

Convicted of corruption

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USPA NEWS - For the first time in the history of Spain, a political party has been condemned as a whole by the courts for corruption. It has happened to the conservative Popular Party that supports the Government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, in a trial in which it has been proved the existence of a 'B-box' destined to receive commissions for political favors to businessmen.

The investigation of the 'Gurtel plot' about the alleged illegal financing of the Spanish Popular Party takes place in two phases. The first, which lasted nine years, three months and 18 days, was sentenced on Thursday at the National Court. In a sentence of 1,687 folios, a hundred of them containing a private vote of the president of the court, contrary to the condemnation of the Popular Party, the magistrates condemn the main people responsible for the corrupt plot to sentences amounting to 351 years in prison. Thus, the brain of the plot, Francisco Correa, is sentenced to 51 years and 11 months in prison; the former treasurer of the Popular Party Luis Barcenás, 33 years and four months in prison; the former mayor of the city of Majadahonda in Madrid, Guillermo Ortega, 38 years and three months in prison; the former mayor of Pozuelo de Alarcón, also in Madrid, Jesús Sepúlveda, 14 years and four months in prison; the former secretary of the Popular Party of Galicia Pablo Crespo, 37 years and six months in jail, and the former regional councilor of Madrid Alberto López Viejo, 31 years and nine months in prison.

Thus, up to a total of 29 convicted, in addition to the Popular Party, which is considered proven that it benefited from illegal accounting and will have to return 245,492.80 Euros. The sentence considers proven that Francisco Correa created "a structure of stable collaboration with the Popular Party" aimed at the provision of services. In parallel, it created "an authentic and effective system of institutional corruption through manipulation mechanisms of central, autonomous and local public procurement." Part of the money went to pay for electoral expenses and as final donations to the 'B-box' of the party.

During the process, the court called to testify as a witness to the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who denied knowing the plot and rejected the existence of double accounting in his party. The sentence says that "his testimony is not credible to rebut the forceful existing test on the 'B-box' of the party" In the corrupt network were involved, between 1999 and 2005, four municipalities (including Madrid) and two autonomous regions (Madrid and Castilla y León). The court considers that Francisco Correa created "a criminal and joint venture" through which he illegally entered 11.25 million Euros: 8.40 million for public contracts and 2.85 million for commissions.

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