

# Journalism is not terrorism

- **La Directa considers the accusations made against one of our journalists to be an attack on the right to information and a threat to the media profession**

A judge at Spain's National Court (Audiencia Nacional), Manuel García Castellón, has included the journalist Jesús Rodríguez as a suspect in judicial investigations into the protest group Tsunami Democràtic. Castellón has classified the demonstrations promoted by Tsunami Democràtic as terrorism, and has deemed the twelve people under investigation to have been among the organisation's political decision-makers.

Jesús Rodríguez has not participated in any illegal activity, and has done nothing more than exercise his basic rights. **He has acted exclusively in his professional capacity to ensure freedom of information, a fundamental right which this judicial decision places under threat.**

**This accusation is an attack on the freedom of the press in general and on La Directa in particular.** The judge's decision must be seen in light of the work done by Jesús Rodríguez in defending basic human rights via this publication over the course of the past eighteen years.

**La Directa has always taken a stand in its coverage of popular struggles, holding those in power to account in cases of wrongdoing, and investigating cases of police misconduct and brutality.** Jesús has written hundreds of articles which shine a light on human rights infringements and the persecution of protest. We believe this judicial attack to be an attempt to impede his work.

**Sadly, this is not the first time that his activities as a journalist have been clamped down on.** In 2016, while covering a demonstration, he was assaulted by a riot police officer. This attack led to injuries to his leg and the fracture of a finger - with 50% loss of mobility - and resulted in five year-long trial which culminated in a guilty verdict against the officer in April 2021. He has also been involved, together with another injured journalist - and as part of the #ProuMentidesPolicials campaign spearheaded by Iridia, Grup Barnils and Mèdia.cat, with additional support from Free Press Unlimited - in bringing a complaint for false statements against a sergeant and an officer of the Catalan Mossos d'Esquadra Police force.

**The decision made by the Audiencia Nacional is an attack on the right to information and a threat to our profession.** As a result, we at La Directa, not only as Jesús Rodríguez's colleagues but also as defenders of honest, critical and transformative journalism, **invite you to sign our statement.**

Within Spain, attacks on and the persecution of journalists are not isolated incidents. Among all the judicial proceedings, it is impossible to forget the closure of media outlets such as *Egin*, *Ardi Beltza* and *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*, as well as the exile and imprisonment of Xavier Vinader. Yet there have been more recent cases too, such as those of the photojournalists Isidre García Puntí and Carles Palacio, and the contributor to *El Salto* Joanna Giménez. At the same time, the heads of TV3 and *Catalunya Ràdio* have been caught up in legal action for having allowed advertising of the Catalan independence referendum, and yet more Catalan radio professionals and TV comedians have fallen foul of the law. Out of the courts, data from Mèdia.cat's Catalan Censorship Map shows that 30.5% of incidents affecting journalists have been the result of police action, the majority during coverage of demonstrations.

**It is thanks to the support of our subscribers, the work of our contributors and staff, and all of our members that we are able to carry out our work with neither fear nor favour. This grave attack on the right to information will not stop us from continuing to engage in journalism which defends human rights and freedoms, as ever, with your support.**

Numerous media outlets and organisations which support the right to information have already signed our statement. **You can consult the signatories below and show your support too.**