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**Spanish state**

# **Women have won!**

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**On September 23, the Prime Minister of the Spanish State, Mariano Rajoy, announced that he was withdrawing the proposal to amend the abortion law. The law's main architect, Minister of Justice Alberto Ruíz Gallardón, immediately resigned.**

Gallardón never tired of repeating that the preliminary draft for "protection of the life of the conceived and the rights of pregnant woman", his project to further restrict women's abortion rights, was the most important project of his career. But he could not even imagine what this would come to mean, since the defeat of this project has ended his political career.

It was a career of thirty years in which he has held a huge number of political positions, one plagued by disasters from the astronomical debt that Madrid citizens will have to pay back as a result of his mismanagement, his repeated Olympian failures, the curtailing of civil liberties perpetrated by the gagging law [1] and the conversion of justice into a luxury for the majority of the population. And as the icing on the cake: his misogyny and contempt for women.

It was of course the government that, in December 2013, approved the draft bill that Gallardón was defending, in a process that had lasted almost three years since they announced their intentions. In this time many women experienced a situation of anguish and fear in the face of uncertainty of what might happen if they needed to have an abortion. Feminist outrage increased as Gallardón reinforced his proposals, with the aim of trying to establish in which cases of malformation of the foetus a woman would have the choice of asking for an abortion.

The total failure of this draft shows the extent to which the government and those who supported it, with the Catholic Church as the most important of these, are distanced from real society, the reality of women, their different life projects and the various forms in which motherhood and sexuality are experienced. We are not willing to give up the profound changes we have won.

That is the reason for their attempt to harken back to the situation of the past century. It was a losing battle for them, but their arrogance and deep patriarchal conservatism did not allow them to suspect that such an error would cost them dear, as shown by the decomposition that is today visible among their ranks.

And the government will pay much more dearly if they try to use women as a currency of exchange, either to pander to an ultra-reactionary sector in permanent crusade against the sexual and reproductive rights of women, or by using our bodies and rights to climb in the polls of voting intentions before the next elections.

The farewell ceremony for Gallardón has had as a counterpoint the celebration of thousands of women in all corners of the Spanish state. Because the withdrawal of the preliminary draft is a first victory of the feminist movement, proponent of a profound change in our society, a victory that is the result of the mobilization that has been maintained on a sustained basis, sometimes very visibly, other times not, sometimes in large demonstrations, other times in more symbolic actions like flash mobs, in protests and occupations in health centres, in churches, also in meetings in parliament, in hundreds of initiatives by the most varied feminist groups. This was a mobilization that had significant support from health professionals among others, and in the final analysis by a significant mobilization of citizens. And always with the goal of explaining and convincing the public that the call for "free abortion, women decide", requires sovereignty over our bodies, and that when we defend our right to decide, we affirm our status as legal subjects, with feminist demands for social justice and real democracy.

## Women have won!

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On Sunday 28 September, the International Day for the Decriminalization of Abortion, there are demonstrations organized by the feminist movement in many cities. It will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate. After Gallardon, the government has already rushed to advance new plans that must be stopped: new attacks on the decision-making ability of young women, and a plan for “protection of the family”. The current law effectively needs to be changed, but in a way radically opposite to that proposed by the government, to ensure that abortion is not criminalized and is normalized as a provision in the public health network.

This coming Sunday, doubly festive, is also the occasion to call for sexual and reproductive rights, among others, the right of lesbians to access to assisted reproduction, for all immigrant women have their social security card, for sex education in all schools, for respect for the autonomy and sexual identity of all persons. History says we are right in our determination not to give in to anything or anyone in the defence of the right to make decisions about our life, and in demanding rights for all women.

*Madrid 24 September 2014*

[Viento del Sur.](#)

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[1] See [here](#).