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Spain: No violent policing of demonstrations

On the eve of the EU summit in Seville this weekend, Amnesty International is again calling on the Spanish authorities to ensure that policing of demonstrations respects the right to peaceful protest as reports emerged of clashes between strikers and police.

In addition to a number of different protests over the next few days, the EU summit is taking place at the same time as a general strike and an immigrant lock-in at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide in Seville.

"The importance of allowing people to assemble and express their opinions peacefully cannot be emphasized enough," said Amnesty International.

Law enforcement officers appear to have used excessive and indiscriminate force during an anti-globalization demonstration in Barcelona in June 2001, and a protest by students in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in November 2001. These precedents prompted the organization to make a similar call to the Spanish authorities before the EU summit in Barcelona in March 2002.

"Policing has to be measured in its methods, and respect the rights of people engaged in non-violent protest," the organization added.

More recently Amnesty International received a report alleging that a health secretary of the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (General Union of Workers, UGT) was physically attacked and wrongfully detained by National Police officers. The incident on 14 June reportedly took place when Inmaculada Alascio and two other of her trade union colleagues were spray painting words of support for the general strike of 20 June on the wall of a commercial centre in Seville. Amnesty International cannot comment about the truth of the accusations about police violence made by the UGT; they remain subject of a criminal investigation.

Amnesty International has issued a last minute appeal to the EU Seville summit, this can be found on <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>.

Public Document

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