

Majorca Daily Bulletin

Saturday, November 30 2013

1€ · Founded 1962 · N.15175 · Passeig de Mallorca 9 A, Palma 07011

50 JUBILEE



The Rigby family arrive for court hearing.

Men tried to behead soldier on London street, court hears: Inside

Spain's anti-protest bill slammed as anti-democratic

London.— Spain's conservative government agreed yesterday to toughen penalties for unauthorised street protests up to a possible 600,000 euro fine, a crack-down that belies the peaceful record of the anti-austerity protests of recent years.

Leftists and civil rights activists have labelled the bill the "Kick in the teeth law" because it penalises a battery of protest measures in what they say is a disregard for democracy in a country that only emerged from right-wing dictatorship in the late 1970s.

But Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, whose People's Party (PP) has an absolute majority in parliament, has said the Citi-

zens' Security Law guarantees freedom and will have the support of a majority of Spaniards.

Street protests and strikes have become increasingly frequent in recent years following huge cuts to education and health spending aimed at shrinking Spain's public deficit to adhere to European Union demands.

But in contrast to Greece and elsewhere, where many similar protests have turned violent, Spain's have remained largely peaceful, despite unemployment of 26 percent, rising poverty, and changes in labour laws that make firing easier.

The bill, approved by the cabinet on Friday and now heading to parliament,

would apply the maximum fine to unauthorised protest that turns violent inside or outside Spain's upper or lower houses.

Among other measures, protesters who cover their faces at demonstrations could be fined up to 30,000 euros while "offensive" slogans against Spain or its regions could reap a similar sanction.

"We want to guarantee a freer and more peaceful coexistence for all Spaniards ... eradicating violence," Interior Minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz told reporters.

The new measures also include fines of up to 30,000 euros for drinking alcohol in public spaces and causing a disturbance, a measure certain to irritate the young drinkers who congregate in

squares across Spain at weekends. The government also plans a new law restricting labour protests. Although most of the recent political protests have been peaceful, some of the anger about the economic crisis and a huge rise in evictions and poverty has targeted members of the People's Party personally. A judge this year ruled that one protest staged at the house of Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria did not constitute a crime.

Opposition parties say the bill violates the right to protest and limits free expression in a country that suffered nearly four decades of fascist dictatorship under Francisco Franco.



The festive season arrives in Palma in style!

Palma.—The Mayor of Palma, Mateo Isern, yesterday officially switched on the Christmas lights in Palma. Hundreds of people gathered in the Plaza Cort for the big event.

The city council has organised a wide ranging festive entertainment plan to tempt shoppers out and give the city a more Christmas feel.

Many of Palma's top streets have Christmas illuminations this year which are switched on during the evening hours.

See *What's On Guide* for your full guide of festive events in Majorca.

Coupon
Saturday
30/11

Authentic Bohemia
CRYSTAL GLASSWARE

TODAY FOR ONLY
34.95€

Bohemia Coupon Majorca Daily Bulletin