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SWEDEN TERROR ATTACK: Inside

FINAL SURRENDER

BASQUE militant separatist group ETA, which waged a bloody campaign for independence from Spain for more than four decades, said yesterday it had surrendered all its arms and explosives.

The BBC cited what it said was a letter from ETA declaring it had handed all its weapons to civilian go-betweens and was now a disarmed organisation.

The move stops short of a full disbanding of a group documented as having killed more than 850 people before declaring a ceasefire in 2011.

Arnaldo Otegi, leader of Basque pro-independence party EH Bildu and who has served jail time for his links with ETA, said this marked the end of the armed fight for a separate state in northern Spain and south-western France.

"We are entering an irreversible situation, violence will not be used to obtain self-determination and independence... We are happily and calmly looking forward to tomorrow," Otegi said.

Otegi called for an independence referendum like that held in Scotland in 2014. A survey last October by pollsters Euskobarometro showed 29 percent of Basques strongly favoured independence and 37 percent had no desire for it.

The middlemen are due to hand over the weapons to authorities today in the French city of Bayonne in a process first flagged in March by Basque activists. Spain's ruling Popular Party (PP) said it would not yield on its long-held refusal to negotiate with ETA.

"They must disarm, disband, apologise and help to clear up crimes that are still unresolved," Education Minister Inigo Mendez de Vigo said.



End of the "Basque armed struggle..."



A GRAND DAY AT AINTREE: Inside