

# *Spanish Court Blocks Catalonia Vote*

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Madrid, September 30 (RHC)-- Spain's constitutional court has decided to suspend Catalonia's referendum on independence following a request from the Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy. According to a court spokeswoman on Monday, 12 judges reached the decision to suspend Catalonia's November independence referendum after an hour-long emergency meeting.

Earlier on Monday, the Spanish government lodged a formal appeal with the constitutional court, asking it to declare the independence referendum illegal. Rajoy told reporters that the independence vote was not "compatible with the Spanish constitution," adding: "Nobody and nothing will be allowed to break up Spain."

The Spanish prime minister also expressed regret over a recent decision by Catalan President Artur Mas to call for the November 9th vote, which is designed to allow the region to declare its independence from Madrid.

On September 27th, Mas formally made the call, defying warnings from Madrid to block the vote in courts. Catalonia's regional parliament has approved a law that allows its leaders to hold consultations on independence. However, a 'Yes' vote for independence in the referendum will not automatically lead to the secession of the region. The vote would only give Mas the mandate to negotiate independence with the Spanish administration.

Catalonia, a wealthy northeastern region of Spain, has a population of 7.6 million people, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the country's economy, and has been seeking independence for years. Polls indicate that a huge majority of Catalans demand an independence referendum, encouraged by a similar referendum in Scotland earlier this month.

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