Beat: Politics

The polisario leader leaves the Spanish hospital and takes refuge in Algeria

After testifying before a Spanish judge

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USPA NEWS - The general secretary of the Polisario Front, Brahim Gali, left Spain on Tuesday night, after declaring in the morning before the judge of the National Court Santiago Pedraz and voluntarily requesting discharge from hospital. Gali, for whom the magistrate did not issue any precautionary measure, traveled from Logroño to Pamplona and, from the latter city, flew to Algeria aboard a civil aircraft with French registration sent by the Algerian Government.

The polisario leader's departure from Spain occurred around ten o'clock at night. Brahim Gali, who had been admitted to the San Pedro hospital in Logroño since April 18, had asked the doctors to be discharged from hospital hours after testifying by videoconference before Judge Santiago Pedraz, in relation to the accusations of genocide, assassination, illegal detention, torture and other crimes, brought against the general secretary of the Polisario Front by the Saharawi Association for the Defense of Human Rights and by an activist of Moroccan descent and Spanish nationality.

In his statement to the judge, Brahim Gali denied all the allegations. His lawyer, Manuel Ollé, affirmed that the accusations are politically motivated and explained that Gali's participation in the events reported when he was Minister of Defense is false. "He had no type of responsibility or action in the conduct attributed to him by the accusations," said the lawyer, adding that the objective of the complaints is "absolutely political" and seeks to undermine "the credibility of the Sahrawi people and their struggle towards self-determination." In this sense, he was convinced that the purpose of the accusations is to show Brahim Gali "as a political trophy."

According to the judge, there is no evidence of the accusations against the general secretary of the Polisario Front, for which he refused to adopt precautionary measures against him. The accusations called for the arrest of Gali and that his passport be withdrawn so that he could not leave Spain. However, the Prosecutor's Office did not request precautionary measures and the judge refused to impose them.

Hours later, Brahim Gali left the San Pedro hospital in Logroño (capital of La Rioja, Northern Spain) and traveled to Pamplona, supposedly because the Riojan airport, due to its low activity, does not have the necessary services to attend the general secretary of the Polisario Front. A plane from Algeria that was heading to Spain to pick up Gali was forced to return when he was flying over the Balearic Islands because he did not have permission to land at the Rioja airport. They had to wait for the arrival of another flight to the Pamplona airport, fifty miles from Logroño.

The medicalized civil aircraft with French registration sent by the Algerian Government picked up Gali at the Pamplona airport around 10 at night and took off for Algiers. From the Spanish Government, the Minister of Development, Jose Luis Abalos, later pointed out that, with the humanitarian motives that led to Brahim Gali receiving him in a Spanish hospital having disappeared, it seems logical that he should have left. And he refused to comment on the new statement that, on the same Tuesday night, the Moroccan Government issued, reiterating that the cause of the diplomatic conflict with Spain is not the general secretary of the Polisario Front but the Spanish position in relation to Western Sahara.

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