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IPB Council, Barcelona meeting, November 2017

## **Towards a peaceful and nonviolent process of dialogue and understanding in the Catalan conflict**

The IPB has a close relationship with Catalonia. Four Catalan entities are IPB's partners (Unipau, the Delàs Centre for Peace Studies, Justícia i Pau, Fundipau) and representatives of those entities are (and have been) in our Board of Directors and our International Council. We have traditionally maintained close collaborations with Catalan institutions such as the ACCD and the Barcelona City Council. In addition, we have decided last year to establish one of the three IPB's decentralized offices in the city of Barcelona.

For this and many other reasons, the situation in Catalonia is of concern and generates great interest within the IPB. Derived from the Catalan conflict, the events of the last months have resulted in a qualitative increase in the level of tensions in Catalonia, which have reached levels of violence that we firmly reject.

The IPB respects the legitimacy of all positions and nuances existing in the Catalan conflict, including those of the Catalan society that has the desire to establish Catalonia as an independent state, and those of the Catalan society that wishes to continue maintaining Catalonia as part of Spain. In any case, what the IPB categorically rejects is the use of violence that has been employed by some of the actors involved.

In this sense, we have verified that the violence that has recently occurred in the Catalan conflict has been mainly carried out by the request of the Spanish government. The repression of the citizens, police brutality suffered by the Catalan population (witnessed by the entire world), the legitimizing discourses which support such violence, as well as the preventive imprisonment of the Catalan government and some of the leaders of the independence movement is strongly repudiated from a pacifist and nonviolent position.

We also highlight an evident democratic deficit and a lack of political will from the Spanish authorities to deal with the Catalan conflict through dialogue.

We also want to declare our satisfaction for the numerous nonviolent social mobilizations in Catalonia that have proved the usefulness and necessity of nonviolence as a tool for social transformation.

We express our solidarity towards the victims of repression and violence, and our respect for the right to self-determination of the Catalan people.

We demand Spanish authorities to free all prisoners related to the Catalan conflict and to allow all of them to participate in a democratic manner in the next Catalan elections, which will be held on 21<sup>st</sup> of December.

We urge political representatives of the Catalan and Spanish governments, as well as politicians from different movements to undertake the necessary democratic processes in order to understand the will of the Catalan society; thus political solutions allowing peaceful coexistence and freedom in Catalonia in the short and long term can be reached.