

# [***Spain's Prime Minister Sánchez says he'll continue in office after days of reflection***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX5-PR71-DYMD-62CD-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

MADRID — Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez vowed to stay in office and govern “with even more strength” Monday, [*ending days of speculation*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-politics-pedro-sanchez-wife-d418bdf1c934d44d11772b5b30d8ad6e) he might resign to stop what he called a smear campaign against his wife after she was accused of corruption.

Sánchez shocked the country last Wednesday when he announced he would take five days off to consider his future following a court's decision to open [*preliminary proceedings against his wife*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-prime-minister-wife-corruption-allegation-2a0a4ab8f603a5c63106813eec5b5579) on the allegations.

A platform linked to far-right causes, Manos Limpias, or “Clean Hands,” accused Begoña Gómez of using her position to influence business deals. Spanish prosecutors say it should be thrown out. Gómez has not been indicted.

Sánchez's resignation would have ended the leadership of a prominent Socialist prime minister at a time when the center right increasingly holds sway in Europe and ahead of European elections in June.

But the politician who has forged a [*reputation as a steely survivor*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-politics-pedro-sanchez-amnesty-catalonia-533aca3affac2d5ee7132eb6ae55b84d) announced Monday that he would once again push on.

“I have decided to continue on with even more strength at the helm of the government of Spain,” he said in a televised speech after informing King Felipe VI of the decision. “It is a decision that does not mean a return to the status quo, this will mark a before and after, I promise you that.”

He did not say, however, what steps he would take. The leading opposition conservative Popular Party has said Sánchez’s behavior was unbecoming of a leader.

The eurozone’s fourth-largest economy had been riveted by the unusual episode that began when Sánchez, prime minister since 2018, canceled his public agenda and holed up in his residence, the Moncloa Palace.

In an emotional letter he posted on social media platform X, he declared himself “deeply in love” with Gómez and said that he could no longer stand aside and watch her being targeted. He said the moves against her constituted a personal attack on his family and he needed time to decide on his priorities.

The suspense ahead of Monday's announcement was such that Spain’s state broadcaster put a 10-minute countdown clock on the screen.

Speaking from the steps of the presidential palace Monday, Sánchez said that he and his wife “know that this campaign to discredit them won’t stop” but that he has decided that he couldn’t give his adversaries the satisfaction of giving up.

[*Rallies by his supporters*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-pedro-sanchez-prime-minister-socialists-77236e18391a2c4498bf2c37193968ee) over the past few days played a part in his decision, he said.

Sánchez, who has [*more than three years left in his term*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-politics-pedro-sanchez-amnesty-catalonia-533aca3affac2d5ee7132eb6ae55b84d), had four options: resign, seek a parliamentary vote of confidence, call a new election or remain in office.

While pundits made their bets on whether his [*career, marked by escaping tight squeezes*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-election-pedro-sanchez-cbfca386f8c47121605d013e93250024), was indeed over, Sánchez ended up taking the least dramatic route and decided to get back to work.

He acknowledged that the past days were unusual for a leader in his position.

“I am aware that I have shown a degree of personal intimacy that is not normally permitted in ***politics***,” he added.

The unprecedented pause by Sánchez came at a delicate moment in Spain and in Europe.

Sánchez’s [*concessions to Catalan separatist parties*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-catalan-independence-amnesty-election-a1b04f2f6e7467c4b301ec7b03f9d41b) in order to hold onto power after elections in July have dominated the political debate in Spain. The prime minster hopes to move past that now and put the focus on the what he says are the unfair tactics of his opponents.

While Sánchez denied his moves last week were political ones, analyst Montserrat Nebrera said they resulted in “a free campaign rally for five full days.”

"Those who were with him will now be with him to the death,” said Nebrera, a professor of constitutional law at the International University of Catalonia.

“It looks like a campaign move to boost the polarization of the electorate between those who are with him and those who are against him,” she said. “It is designed to have an impact in the Catalan elections and even more so in the European elections, which were not looking great for the Socialists.”

While popular internationally, the 52-year-old politician is loved or despised in Spain.

Sánchez blamed the investigation against his wife on online news sites politically aligned with the Popular Party and the far right Vox party that spread what he called “spurious” allegations.

Earlier this year, Spain’s government watchdog for conflict of interests tossed out a complaint made by the Popular Party against Sánchez in which the party claimed that Gómez had allegedly influenced her husband in a decision related to an airline.

The Popular Party criticized Sánchez's behavior on Monday.

“(Sánchez) has pulled the leg of a nation of 48 million people,” party leader Alberto Núñez Feijóo said. “He neglected his duties for five days as part of a campaign ploy.”

Sánchez justified his hiatus as necessary for him to think in peace.

“We live in a society that teaches us and demands us to to keep going at full throttle no matter what,” Sánchez said during his short speech. “But sometimes in life the only way to move forward is to stop and reflect and decide with clarity which path we want to take.”

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Wilson reported from Barcelona, Spain.

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