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## CATALAN POLICE CHIEF IN MADRID COURT

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BBC (6 October 2017)

The Catalan chief of police, Josep Lluís Trapero, is appearing before a judge in Madrid on suspicion of sedition against the state.

His Mossos d'Esquadra force is accused of failing to protect Spanish national police from protesters ahead of the 1 October independence referendum.

Another Catalan police officer and two leading independence activists are also being questioned as suspects.

The Catalan vote last Sunday was declared illegal under Spanish law.

The hearing is taking place at the national criminal court in Madrid. The defendants are accused of failing to help Guardia Civil police tackle thousands of pro-independence protesters outside the Catalan Economy Department in Barcelona on 20 September.

Leading newspaper El País says the accusation against the Mossos is extraordinary in post-Franco democratic Spain.

The crime of sedition has been in every Spanish penal code since 1822 and carries a potential prison term of up to 15 years. It amounts to rebellion against state decisions or national security forces.

As recently as August the Mossos was being widely praised for quickly tackling the Islamist cell that carried out the Barcelona terror attack in that month.

[Mossos chief Josep Lluís Trapero, file pic] EPA

Commander Trapero: His Mossos force had been praised for tackling the Barcelona jihadists

The Catalan regional government says it might unilaterally declare independence within days.

Spain's Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy will chair a cabinet meeting to discuss the next moves in the confrontation with Catalonia.

Organisers of Sunday's vote put the turnout at 42%, with 2.2 million people taking part. They say 90% voted for independence, but have not published final results. There have been several claims of irregularities.

There was violence at polling stations as police, trying to enforce a Spanish court ban on the vote,

attempted to seize ballot boxes and disperse voters.

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Kaynak/Source: