

Spain's Podemos leader to face party vote over luxury house purchase

Wednesday 23 May 2018, by [JONES Sam](#) (Date first published: 20 May 2018).

Pablo Iglesias and Irene Montero accused of betraying principles over €600,000 purchase

The leader of Spain's anti-austerity [Podemos](#) party and its parliamentary spokeswoman are submitting themselves to a confidence vote in the hope of putting an end to criticism of their decision to buy a €600,000 (£525,000) house in the mountains outside Madrid.

[Pablo Iglesias](#) and Irene Montero, who are expecting twins, have been accused of betraying the party's principles and joining the petty bourgeoisie by purchasing the property.

Among those who have criticised the move is José María González, the Podemos mayor of Cádiz.

"Podemos's ethics code isn't a formality," [he said](#). "It's a commitment to living like working people so that you can represent them."

On Saturday night, Iglesias and Montero announced a vote in which party members will decide whether they should carry on in their posts.

"I didn't think this would generate a debate or turn into such big news," Iglesias told a press conference. But I think that when a political leader's credibility is called into question, you need to face up to it and not hide away.

"It should be party members who decide whether we should carry on as general secretary and parliamentary spokeswoman and whether we should carry on as MPs. And we've decided to ask them."

Montero said she and Iglesias had lost their right to privacy over recent days, adding that she would not wish their current situation on anyone. But, she said: "We knew this is what we'd be up against when we went into politics."

Podemos members will be asked the question: "Do you think that Pablo Iglesias and Irene Montero should continue as Podemos's general secretary and parliamentary spokeswoman?"

Podemos, which was born from [the indignados movement and fury over corruption and austerity](#), has redrawn Spain's political map. Along with the centre-right Ciudadanos (Citizens) party, it has ended decades of dominance by the conservative People's party and the Socialist Workers' party (PSOE).

However, while Ciudadanos has surged over recent months, attracting increasing support over its hardline stance on the Catalan independence crisis, Podemos has fared less well.

Predictions that it would [overtake the PSOE and become the dominant party of the Spanish left at](#)

[the last general election in June 2016](#) did not come to pass and Podemos – a broad ideological church – has [suffered splits and disagreements](#).

In February last year, [Iglesias tightened his grip on the party after seeing off a challenge from his more moderate deputy, Íñigo Errejón](#).

Iglesias had vowed to step down as leader if his agenda and list of candidates for Podemos's leadership did not win majority approval.

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The Guardian

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