2026

SPAIN AS A TARGET



Pax Consulting

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NoName057, the well-known Russian linked hacking team, has been very active in Spain.

On **17 November 2026,** Spain's National Police arrested a **51-year-old Spanish former security guard** in Burgos. Investigators allege that he recruited sympathisers for **NoName057(16),** a pro-Russian group known for disrupting websites, distributed its propaganda in eight Spanish towns and cities, and publicly encouraged violence against Ukrainians and police officers. Police described his activities as the group's first established physical presence in Spain. Searches recovered firearms and **more than 5,000 rounds of ammunition.** The ministry attributed at least 447 cyberattacks in Spain since 2024 to the group as a whole.

In accordance with the upsurge of Russian activities in Europe, Spain is not escaping from being targeted, too.

2. INVESTIGATION

Investigators have determined that the arrested man had been recruited by Enrique Arias Gil, who lives in Moscow and cooperates or is part of NoName057. Whether Arias recruited him remains an open question in the criminal investigation.

Arias Gil is a Madrid-born political scientist who taught security and intelligence subjects in the private sector. He arrived in Russia in **August 2024** to study on a scholarship from **Casa Rusa in Madrid.** In a later interview, he described a longstanding political and cultural affinity with Russia. The chronology matters here. **He was already living in Russia more than a year before his name appeared on Europe's Most Wanted list.**

He told the Russian state news agency TASS that he applied for political asylum in **February 2025** and had received it by **February 2026.** At the time of that announcement, *The Moscow Times* could not verify a published asylum decree. The scholarship explains the original journey. His account of seeking protection explains his stated reason for staying.

In 2025, National Court judge **Francisco de Jorge** issued an international arrest warrant. Spanish investigators allege that Arias gathered sensitive information about Spanish critical infrastructure and security personnel to facilitate NoName057(16)'s attacks and promoted the group's activities through his Spanish-language Telegram channel, *Desinformador Ruso*. His wanted notice was published on **12 September 2025.** The allegations include computer sabotage for terrorist

purposes, glorification of terrorism and membership in a criminal organisation.



In October 2026, Arias publicly took credit for disclosing information about Spanish security personnel. *El País*, citing the police investigation, reported that the bulk of the material had been assembled from publicly accessible sources and that some entries were inaccurate. After the Burgos suspect's release, *Europa Press* reported that Arias's channel circulated an intimidating message aimed at the senior police officer responsible for the arrest.

The disclosure of information had taken place in August 2026. In his Telegram channel he published links to download personal information of alleged members of the Spanish security forces, armed forces and intelligence services (over 400 individuals). As stated above, the accuracy of the information was random, according to investigators.

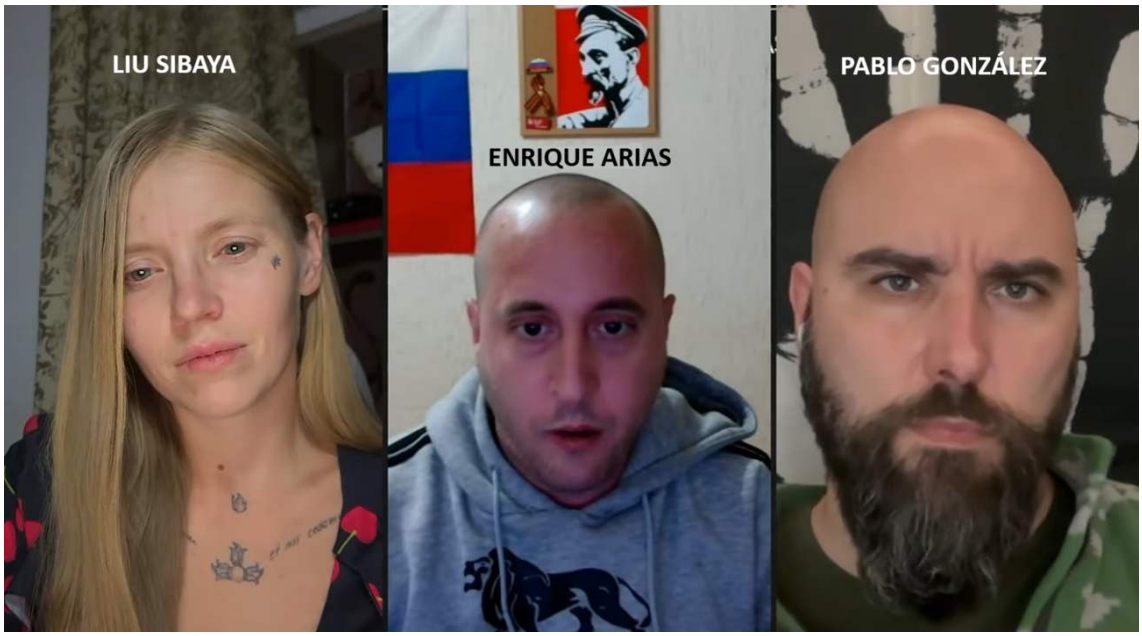
In a way, Enrique Arias Gil has entered the Russian environment whose target is developing activities in favour of Putin's regime. It involves the digital world but also the disinformation networks in Spanish, conveying pro-Russian narratives in Spain and Latin America.

3. OLD ACQUAINTANCES

On 5 November 2026 Arias Gil was interviewed by a Russian influencer who used to live in Spain , Liu Sibaya. Sibaya runs a youtube channel. Keeping her regular discourse in favour of Putin, **she invited to the interview a Spanish citizen who had been arrested in Poland for spying on behalf of the GRU, Pablo González Yagüe**, also known as Pavel Rubtsov.

He was released from jail after an exchange of spies between the West and Russia on 1 August 2024. He was seen being

greeted by Putin who went to the airport to receive them as heroes of the fatherland.



The youtube channel run by Pablo González delivers messages in accordance with the goals that Putin administration goes after.

Pablo started the channel in April 2026. It seems he is publishing with a constant rhythm. **It might indicate he is involved in the Spanish-language machine of disinformation.**

So far, he has interviewed the following individuals and his main collaborators are:

Person	Publications	Verified participation
Pablo González Yagüe	**59**	Co-founder and presenter. Hosts all 26 numbered episodes, takes part in all 29 live streams and in the interview with Angelika Karetkina. The three short clips reproduce passages of his from episode 9. Inaugural broadcast · Episode 9
Simone Monticchio	**6**	Italian lawyer and co-founder. Co-hosts episodes **1 to 5** and takes part in the Karetkina interview. In episode 6, Pablo explains that he is presenting alone. In

		episode 7 he reads out the message in which Simone says that his professional and academic commitments prevent him from continuing. Farewell message, from 0:47. (Haize Gorriak)
Liu Sivaya	**29**	Hosts the current-affairs live streams alongside González, between **25 May** and **17 November.** The broadcasts were distributed on both of their channels. She also takes part in the conversation with Javier García Oliver and in the interview with Enrique Arias Gil. First live stream · Live stream of 17 November. (teapawt)
Angelika Karetkina	**1**	Journalist and presenter on Russian television channel **SPAS.** Pablo and Simone interview her on **12 May** about her experience in Spain, feminism, religion and conservative values in Russia. The channel spells her name *Angelika Karetkina*. Introduction of the guest, 0:47. (15/11/24)
Javier García Oliver	**1**	Political scientist and analyst. Takes part with Liu and Pablo in the **special of 23 July.** He is the guest most easily overlooked: the video is titled simply *Especial análisis de la actualidad* and has no description. He speaks from **0:08**, and the entry for Liu's parallel broadcast gives both of his surnames. Appearance

		on Radio Roja Parda. (Liu Sivaya)
Enrique Arias Gil, "Desinformador Ruso"	**1**	Interviewed by Liu and Pablo on **5 November.** Liu introduces him by first name, surname and alias. The Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* also identified the three participants. Introduction, from 1:12. (rp.pl)

In addition to his channel, he has also been invited to participate in other podcasts and channels such as the one run by the Colonel Pedro Baños. Baños has also been linked to Liu Sivaya in the past. Liu has a strained relationship with Baños and other podcasters such as Rubén Gispert. She has stated that both serve the goals of the regime in Russia, but she has complained about their excesses regarding some news with the only goal of gaining subscribers and attention.

Baños has been controversial. His stance against NATO and in favour of Putin raised some suspicions. His name was even mentioned as one of the candidates to head the department of national security in Spain under the presidency of Pedro Sánchez. The appointment was ultimately not made because of strong political opposition (especially from the Partido Popular and Ciudadanos) and criticism in the media. He was accused of holding "pro-Russian" and pro-Kremlin positions because of his earlier statements about Vladimir Putin, the war in Syria and alleged Russian interference in the Catalan independence process. Instead, the government ended up appointing General Miguel Ángel Ballesteros.

Baños has also been very vocal against the CNI. Baños may have good information about the CNI, since some comrades from his Military Academy class worked at the agency.

However, it must be said that being pro-Russian is not, by far, a crime. It may have some implications in political terms, but it should not be used as a throwing tomahawk to discredit or give credit to anyone.

3.1 Digression about being pro-anything.

Contemporary political polarization complicates the public expression of personal opinion. It discourages attentive engagement with the reasons behind individual positions and obscures the nuances that characterize them.

Labels such as “pro-Russian” or “pro-American” are analytically imprecise. The Kremlin has long supported both far-right and far-left movements in Western societies, a strategy consistent with the political technology associated with Vladislav Surkov and the notion of “managed” or “sovereign” democracy.

What political position, then, does the label “pro-Russian” actually denote? Some Western groups on the far left nostalgically evoke the Soviet Union, whereas nationalist groups on the far right are drawn to the Kremlin’s defence of national sovereignty, traditional values and imperial identity. That internationalist and nationalist currents can converge around the same regime recalls the “horseshoe theory” usually attributed to Jean-Pierre Faye, according to which the extremes of the political spectrum approach one another. The theory remains contested, and empirical research offers only partial support for it. The scholarly literature on the subject is extensive; the point here is merely to illustrate the ideological opacity of the present moment.

A comparable observation applies to the contemporary United States. Donald Trump displays notable affinities with Vladimir Putin in style and political temperament, yet he is generally classified simply as a figure of the radical right, and his conduct is moderated by the institutional constraints he faces. The same populist impulse, however, can be discerned in both Moscow and Washington.

The decisive difference between the two leaders is institutional: Putin presides over an autocracy consolidated over a quarter of a century, whereas liberal-democratic checks and balances limit the extent to which Trump can govern illiberally. Hannah Arendt’s The Origins of Totalitarianism (1951) reminds us that the erosion of such constraints is precisely what distinguishes regimes of different kinds.

Ideas should not be used to stigmatize individuals or to justify censorship, and everyone must remain free to revise their views. Ideas are not principles; they are dynamic and open to change.

4. ACTIVITY ON X

Pablo González Yagüe is also active on X where his relations with Spain reveal friends and foes.

In X, Liu Sivaya performs outstandingly in line with Pablo González. But the most interesting are his links with Enrique Refoyo.

Enrique Refoyo is a Spanish political scientist and translator who created *El Espía del Telón* (@elespiadeltelon). **He is also editor-in-chief of *Geoestrategia*, a Spanish geopolitics outlet directed by Juan Antonio Aguilar**[1]. Refoyo has visited the Donbas (allegedly Liu Sivaya is living there after she left Spain), he has participated in meetings on multipolarity in Moscow and appears frequently on Radio Sputnik. The Spanish-language channel *Mundo Multipolar* also hosted his livestreams, **giving him an audience beyond his own subscribers.**

On Telegram, Refoyo regularly circulated material from both Russian state media and the outlet where he worked. **Its two most frequently forwarded sources were *Geoestrategia* and the Spanish-language service of the Russian state news agency TASS.**

Refoyo's connection to Liu Sivaya is visible in how their material circulated and both have shared videos and have publicly interacted showing the same content in their respective channels. The constitutional challenge that Poland faced by the end of October represent an example of that interaction.

The closest documented link between **Refoyo's professional circle and Enrique Arias Gil** runs through **Juan Antonio Aguilar.** Aguilar wrote a foreword to Arias Gil's book and Arias Gil shared Aguilar's material extensively from December 2024 onward.

Refoyo and González exchange messages of support. Refoyo is conspicuously helping González to stand out.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Spain is in the wake of Europe. As hybrid actions from Russia intensify in the West, so it happens in Spain.

Pablo González Yagüe has been incorporated in the media staff that works in favour of the Russian regime in Spanish. It's remarkable that before his arrest in 2022 he

[1] Aguilar has been mentioned before in the report A bit on disinformation

was never detected doing nothing against the interests of Spain. However, **after his release he is behaving as one member of the hive** working to become one of the voices in Spanish which echoes the greatness of the owner of the Kremlin.

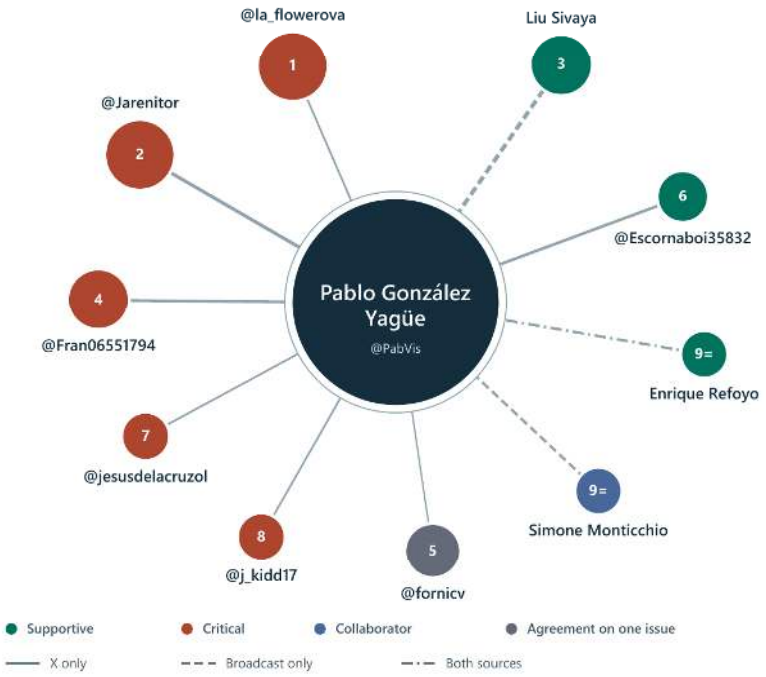
It is interesting to realize that the pro-Russian media environment in Spanish remained static for some time. Recently, there has been **two important acquisitions by the Kremlin** which could boost (actually they already do) the activity in the digital world against Spain and the presence of messages from the Kremlin factory in Spanish: Enrique Arias and Pablo González. **None of them can return to Spain** (González could use his Russian identity to test the controls). Arias was a source of the Guardia Civil and González was not detected doing nothing against Spanish interests. **Now, both are keen on causing harm to Spain.**

Arias was frustrated for the lack of actions on the part of the Guardia Civil based on his statements (according to his declarations in youtube). **González was very much involved in courting Putin's opposition leaders to gather information about their activities in Europe.** Arias has a couple of jobs in Russia in two institutions (Academia). **González seems to be making a living from his cooperation with the regime,** and it cannot be ruled out that he is also given a position in Russian institutions as he is a political scientist and journalist.

ANNEX. PABLO GONZÁLEZ'S NETWORK

Public support and criticism in Pablo González Yagüe's network

The 10 highest-ranked direct contacts, classified by their public conduct toward González.



Evidence behind each classification

Select a contact name to open a representative source.

Rank	Contact	Public stance	Score	EV	BC	X	Air
1	@la_flowerova Challenged his interpretation of a video.	Critical	0.6520	0.066	10.50%	2	0
2	@Jarenitor Repeatedly questioned his credibility.	Critical	0.6390	0.165	5.47%	14	0
3	Liu Sivaya Called for his release and later co-hosted broadcasts.	Supportive	0.5003	0.218	0.007%	0	31
4	@Fran06551794 Challenged his reporting on the Crimea bridge.	Critical	0.4931	0.139	3.67%	8	0
5	@fornicv Agreed on one point about Putin's visit to China.	Issue only	0.3952	0.042	6.28%	1	0
6	@Escornaboi35832 Backed his criticism of coverage of his own case.	Supportive	0.3317	0.126	0.93%	7	0
7	@jesusdelacruzol Criticised his public image after the prisoner exchange.	Critical	0.2854	0.067	2.76%	2	0
8	@j_kidd17 Accused him of spreading propaganda.	Critical	0.2846	0.067	2.76%	2	0
9=	Enrique Refoyo Defended him during detention and later shared sources.	Supportive	0.2749	0.120	0%	5	1
9=	Simone Monticchio Co-founded and co-hosted Radio Roja Parda with him.	Collaborator	0.2749	0.120	0%	0	6

EV Eigenvector centrality BC Normalized betweenness = Tied rank
X Direct replies or quotes Air Credited broadcasts

How to read this graph

Node area gives equal weight to eigenvector and betweenness, each scaled to its maximum among 151 direct contacts in the 211-node network. Link width follows the number of observations on a log scale.

Sources: NodeXL X replies and quotes (Oct–Nov 2026), credited broadcasts (Apr–Nov 2026), and dated public statements for stance. The two 2023 statements are used only to assess support.

ANNEX 2. REFERENCES

Source
Pax Consulting, *A bit on disinformation*
Geoestrategia, *Quiénes somos*
Ramón Pedregal, *Cubainformación*, interview with Enrique Refoyo
Golden Owl, *El arsenal invisible*
Newtral, *El falso 'fact-checker' del Kremlin*
Golden Owl, *El triángulo oculto de Moscú*
Ángel Luis de Santos, *Infodefensa*, coverage of *El arsenal invisible*
The Geopost, *Russian-linked network combines propaganda, informant recruitment and cyberattacks against the West*

In addition, searches and analysis on X, youtube and Instagram has been carried out to sustain statements and carry out net analysis.