

Spain: Fascist anthem played as bullfighting returns to Mallorca

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Far-right Vox leader shows support while animal welfare activists protest

Hundreds of animal rights activists protested outside the bullring in Palma de Mallorca at the weekend as bullfighting returned to the island for the first time since it was outlawed in 2017.

Around 400 protestors chanted: "It's not art, it's torture" and "No to bullfighting", while inside the ring 12,000 people waited to watch some of Spain's top *toreros* (bullfighters) enter the ring.

Bullfight supporters chanted: "Freedom" while the arena's loudspeaker system drowned out the protesters, first with the song Viva España, and then a rendition of the banned fascist anthem Cara al Sol (Facing the Sun).

The Balearic Islands regional government outlawed bullfighting in 2017 and promoted a form of the activity in which the animal was not harmed.

The *torero* could only be armed with a cape, the bull could not be struck with *banderillas* – the skewers used to provoke the animal – and the bull could not be in the ring for more than 10 minutes. Causing physical or psychological damage to the bull carried fines of up to €100,000 (£93,000).

In 2018 the supreme court overruled the decision, retaining only the prohibition of alcohol at bullfights and restricting entrance to over-18s. The court ruled the regional court had exceeded its authority in outlawing a part of the nation's cultural heritage.

[Bullfighting](#) is viewed by supporters as a fundamental part of Spanish culture and major bullfights are reported not as a sport but on the cultural pages of newspapers.

Bullfighting has been banned in other regions, notably the Canary Islands, where it has been illegal since the 1990s, and in Catalonia, which outlawed it in 2010. However, the Catalan tradition of bull running, in which a bull is pursued with flaming material attached to its horns, is still permitted on the grounds that it isn't cruel.

Jorge Campos, the leader of the [far-right Vox party](#) in the islands, arrived at the Mallorca bullring draped in a Spanish flag, saying he had come to show his support for bullfighting.

According to government statistics the number of bullfights fell from 3,651 in 2007 to 1,521 in 2018, although there was a small rise in Castilla-La Mancha, Valencia, La Rioja and Navarra.

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