

Iñaki Uria finally freed

He left Aranjuez prison at 19.45 hours yesterday after posting bail of 450,000 euros in securities

Imanol Murua-Uria - ARANJUEZ (Madrid)

"I'm not free," said Iñaki Uria, shortly after coming out of Aranjuez prison. After embracing his relatives, friends and colleagues who had gone to the gates of the prison to welcome him, he left Aranjuez at 19.45 after having been 17 and a half months behind bars and after posting 450,000 euros in bail with the Spanish National Criminal Court. With his release on-trial he had thought he would be required to report to the police station every day, whereas the writ authorising his release states that he will have to report on Mondays and Fridays, and instead of going to the police station, he will have to go to the court.

Uria left prison brimming with joy and grinning from ear to ear. Twelve kilos leaner he emerged from prison sporting a black BERRIA T-shirt. He hugged his parents first and then the rest of his relatives, friends and colleagues who had travelled down to Aranjuez on the coach. Spanish Civil Guards at the prison gates looked on as *Txistulariak* (Basque flute players) from Zarautz (Gipuzkoa) played *Kalera, Kalera* and a toast was made with cool *Txakolina* (Basque white wine). Everyone's spirits rose as the flute players gave a rendering of *Inaxio gure patroia handia* (*) before getting on the coach.

"I'm delighted to be out but I don't feel that I'm free," said Uria, once he was on the coach bound for Andoain (Gipuzkoa). "And not just because I'm on conditional release, but because I feel that all of us Basque citizens are on conditional release," he added. "Under a special system of laws we are under the control of a special court like the Spanish National Criminal Court, and we haven't yet done enough to overcome that." As Egunkaria S.A.'s chief executive, he remembers the response when [Euskaldunon Egunkaria](#) was closed down: "At that time people asked for protection, but it is evident that we still lack that protection." Shortly after his release he thanked all those who had been calling for his release and all who had risen up against the closing down of Egunkaria. "My thanks to everyone, but not just thanks; we have to carry on, because lots of people are still inside." Uria also remembered Xabier Alegria "especially, because he was arrested with the rest of us and is still in prison." He said that over the last few days he had been recalling Iñaki Uriarte, a colleague who passed away recently, especially: "He will be sorely missed," he said.

Uria said the prison he was leaving behind was "a place for crushing all the prisoners. And inside there's another prison for Basques. They are much more authoritarian towards Basque prisoners. Basque prisoners are subjected to apartheid in prison." Uria established important friendships during his 17 and a half months inside. "There are tremendous people inside, young people worth their weight in gold." He particularly remembered two young people who had recently been in his wing in Aranjuez prison and who could face long prison terms for being members of *Segi* and *Haika* (Basque nationalist left youth organisations).

(*) The first line of the song, "Ignatius, our Great Patron", dedicated to St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits (born in 1491 in Loyola, Gipuzkoa). Iñaki or Inaxio are the Basque forms of Ignatius.