

**CCOO MADRID CITY FIREFIGHTERS' UNION SECTION  
PRESS RELEASE**

## Madrid Firefighters Warn the Mayor and Inform the Government Delegate of the Lack of Real Reinforcement Ahead of the Pope's Visit

**Madrid, 2 June 2026**

The municipal rescue, firefighting and emergency service warns that the planned deployment does not effectively increase operational capacity, but merely redistributes resources from an already insufficient ordinary shift.

Madrid Firefighters wish to express to the media and the public their deep concern over the lack of real staffing reinforcement at fire stations ahead of the Pope's visit to Madrid, an event expected to bring large crowds and exceptional operational complexity.

This situation has been formally reported in writing to the Mayor of Madrid, requesting urgent intervention to order the activation of the **N+ level** in Madrid Firefighters as a minimum and essential measure for an event of maximum operational demand.

The situation has also been formally communicated to the **Government Delegate in the Region of Madrid**, given his role in the overall coordination of the security operation for the Pope's visit. The lack of real reinforcement in the Fire Service may directly affect the city's ability to respond to any serious emergency during the event.

This is not an ordinary situation. It involves a scenario with a large concentration of people, significant mobility restrictions, traffic limitations and exceptional pressure on the response capacity of public emergency services. However, as far as Madrid Firefighters are concerned, what has been announced so far does not amount to an effective reinforcement of the service.

We are particularly concerned that, while specific reinforcement measures have apparently been adopted in other areas of the Security and Emergency Department, no real reinforcement has been provided for the Fire Service. During those days, fire stations will be operating with staffing levels designed for ordinary days, despite the extraordinary nature of the event.

The relocation of vehicles, the presence of senior officers at specific points or internal organisational adjustments do not increase the real capacity to intervene. They merely move resources away from fire stations that have already been working for years with structural staff shortages. This means that the areas normally covered by those resources may be left with a reduced response capacity.

To put it clearly and respectfully: Madrid Firefighters are not being reinforced; resources are simply being moved from one place to another.

The seriousness of the situation is even greater because fire stations are already operating with insufficient staffing levels on a daily basis. Even under normal circumstances, the service does not fully reach the daily operational reference level of **252 personnel** established in commitment 7.1 of the Fire Service Charter — a reference set around 20 years ago, before the increase in emergency interventions, the opening of new fire stations and the current urban and operational complexity of Madrid.

Therefore, the problem is not only the absence of extraordinary reinforcement. The underlying problem is that an exceptional situation is being addressed with a staffing structure that is already insufficient for ordinary activity.

Moreover, there is already a specific mechanism designed to increase the number of firefighters in critical, exceptional or high-risk situations: the so-called **N+ level**. This mechanism, regulated by internal operational rules, provides for increasing daily staffing to approximately **309 firefighters**.

In other words, the tool exists. It is regulated. It has a clear purpose. And that purpose is precisely to reinforce the service when the city faces situations of special risk or maximum operational demand.

The real staffing situation can be verified by comparing the operational figures for 5, 6 and 7 June with those of an ordinary day, such as Monday, 1 June 2026.

Firefighter-drivers and their higher categories are essential, as their shortage limits the ability to respond simultaneously to several incidents. Their lack of availability is especially critical in an event of this nature, as it may render other existing resources ineffective if they cannot be properly mobilised.

The figures show that the service is far from reaching the N+ level — and in some cases does not even reach the lower operational levels:

1. On a completely ordinary day such as 1 June, there were **49 personnel** able to mobilise emergency vehicles, placing the service at level C, almost level B. These resources are already insufficient to cover all the interventions included in the Fire Service's operational catalogue.
2. On 6 June, there are **40 personnel** able to mobilise emergency vehicles, placing the service at level D, almost level C.
3. On 5 and 7 June, the figures are **46 and 45 personnel**, respectively, corresponding to level C.
4. To reach the N+ level, there should be **69 personnel** able to mobilise emergency vehicles. This means that, during the days of this extraordinary

event, the service will be operating at around **60% of the staffing level that should be available** for this type of situation.

A similar situation applies to the total number of personnel across the different firefighter categories, which is approximately **25% below** what would be required for an event of this magnitude.

For this reason, Madrid Firefighters consider it incomprehensible that the N+ level has not been activated for an event of these characteristics. The Pope's visit cannot be treated as an ordinary day from the perspective of firefighting, rescue and emergency response.

When an emergency occurs, firefighters do not play a symbolic or secondary role. They rescue, extinguish fires, evacuate people and save lives. Maintaining the current approach weakens the overall security operation and compromises the capacity to respond to any serious incident.

There can be no truly extraordinary security operation while the rescue and firefighting service continues to rely on an already weakened ordinary shift.

There can be no real prevention if the very service that acts when prevention fails is not reinforced.

And no effective response can be demanded in a major emergency without first guaranteeing the necessary human resources.

For all these reasons, Madrid Firefighters demand the immediate review of the operational plan, real and effective reinforcement of staffing at fire stations, activation of the N+ level and adaptation of the service to the actual level of operational demand imposed by an event of this nature.

They also call for accountability for the failure to properly dimension the Fire Service response from the outset, despite the expected large attendance, mobility restrictions, risk context and ordinary staffing shortages already affecting fire stations.

Madrid cannot face an extraordinary situation with an insufficient Fire Service deployment.

Safety is not guaranteed by announcements, institutional presence or mobility plans alone, but by sufficient personnel, real resources and responsible decisions.

Facing this extraordinary event under the current operational conditions is, in our view, a reckless decision. That is why we are raising this warning urgently, as soon as we became aware of the situation, and while there is still time to correct it before the visit of His Holiness.

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