

Beat: News

Cristina de Borbon and her husband separate

Sister of King Felipe VI of Spain

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USPA NEWS - The Infanta Cristina de Borbon and her husband, the former international handball player Iñaki Urdangarin, have decided to "interrupt their marital relationship," as they announced this Monday with a joint statement sent to the EFE agency. The couple assured that the commitment to their four children "remains intact."

The sister of King Felipe VI and her until now husband did not give details about the terms of the separation, caused by the photographs published in the magazine Lecturas last Wednesday, in which Urdangarin was seen walking hand in hand with a co-worker called Ainhoa Armentia. The couple decided to "interrupt" their marriage 24 years after marrying in the Barcelona cathedral. Only a year after meeting at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Infanta Cristina and Iñaki Urdangarin were married on October 4, 1997. The handball player and the daughter of then King Juan Carlos I also chose to start a family city of Barcelona, where their four children were born.

The family lived in the Pedralbes neighborhood and divided their vacations between Mallorca, where the entire King's family used to spend the summer, and Bidart, a city in the French Basque Country where the Urdangarin family spends the summer. In 2009 they moved to Washington after Urdangarin was appointed president of the Public Affairs Commission of Telefónica in Latin America, but their lives changed completely in 2011, when the husband of the infanta Cristina was charged in the Palma Arena case, which later led to the Noos case.

According to the statement sent this Monday to the EFE agency, the separation is "by mutual agreement", but the commitment to their four children "remains intact." Both asked for "the utmost respect for all those around us." The statement states that, "by mutual agreement, we have decided to interrupt our marriage relationship. Our commitment to our children remains intact. Since it is a private decision, we ask for the utmost respect from all those around us. Cristina de Borbon and Iñaki Urdangarin."

For a long time, the couple had maintained a long-distance relationship due to the work of both, and, although they lived as a couple when they met, marital estrangement was part of their normality in recent years due to Urdangarin's sentence to almost six years in prison in the Noos case. The judicial process, in which the infanta Cristina was acquitted, ended in 2018 with a sentence for Iñaki Urdangarin of five years and ten months, a situation that separated the family for a long time. Urdangarin remained confined for 15 months without any kind of outing in the Brieve prison, in the province of Avila, and since last June he has enjoyed a semi-freedom regime.

He lives with his mother in Vitoria - the capital of the Basque Country - and works at the Imaz y Asociados law firm, located in a well-known square in the Basque capital, while he is semi-free. For her part, the Infanta Cristina continues to live in Geneva, where she teleworks from home for the Aga Khan Foundation. She lives there with her little daughter, Irene, 16, because the rest of her children, between 19 and 22 years old, lead their own lives due to their studies or their sports commitments.

The sister of King Felipe VI is not a member of the Royal Family. She ceased to be the same day as her brother's proclamation as monarch, as happened with the Infanta Elena. One and the other are today the King's family, but not the Royal Family. On June 11, 2015, as a demonstration of his commitment to "exemplarity, honesty and transparency" that he assumed on the day of his proclamation, King Felipe VI withdrew from the Infanta Cristina the title of Duchess of Palma, which he had previously granted her for the monarch Juan Carlos I on the occasion of his marriage with Iñaki Urdangarin.

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