

MINH Presentation to the Decolonization Committee of the UN

Escrito por Wilma E. Reverón Collazo / Copresidenta del MINH

Lunes, 23 de Junio de 2014 05:23 - Última actualización Viernes, 27 de Junio de 2014 13:47



Mr. President of the Decolonization Committee, Ambassador Xavier Lasso, delegates, personnel secretariat, and public present:

I am here in the name of the National Hostosian Independence Movement, organization that fights for independence and social justice and celebrates the tenth anniversary of its foundation.

This June 23th, 2014, after 116 years of colonization from the United States, the fact that we are here affirming our country is a result of an unbreakable spirit of struggle exemplified in its maximum expression for Oscar López Rivera. He has been incarcerated for 33 years for the crime of sedition, the Mandela of Latin America, he continues to be as firm today as when he was arrested. Nothing has been able to break his spirit, his principles or his firmness. Not even his 12 years in solitary confinement, or all the tortures he has been submitted to, among them sleep deprivation and the denial to allow him to come out for his mother's death and burial. Oscar is without a doubt the symbol of the capacity for resistance of our people. I invite at this moment the members of the Committee and the public to honor Oscar with 33 seconds of silent reflexing on his inhumane incarceration.

(33 seconds)

As the CELAC has declared, Puerto Rico is a Latin American and Caribbean country and for that reason it is of interest to all the countries of the region. Puerto Rico should be participating fully in those meetings, if it were not for the fact that its sovereignty has been illegally hinder by the United States.

Puerto Rico is drowning in an economy degraded to useless scrap with the consequent worsening of social problems such as unemployment, criminality, drug addiction, and violence

against women, abusive behavior toward children, the aging and the poverty stricken. In 1952, the United States demanded that we eliminate Section 20 of the Letter of Rights that incorporated the social and economic rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while it demanded to insert an article (Art. VI Sec. 8), elevating to a constitutional ranking the payment of the public debt to the bondholders in Wall Street.

In accordance with this imposition by the United States, each colonial government during their term, has legislated and planned measures and budgeted to pay the bondholders before anything else. In order to do this, they have attacked state employees, firing them in masses and taking away the rights they had previously earned through collective bargaining and labor contracts.

Gentlemen delegates of the Committee, our workers find themselves in the streets today, fighting for the right to earn salaries that allow them to live with dignity and to aspire to an honorable retirement. But the colonial government does not have sovereign powers to make decisions, even when the life of the people is at risk, like renegotiating or restructuring the debt.

Our economy finds itself sieged by the mega-stores of the United States that have done away with native businesses, like the local pharmacies that have been displaced by Walgreens, and CVS and the stores that have been displaced by Wal-Marts, among others.

Mr. President and gentlemen delegates, the people of Puerto Rico have expressed themselves in four different consultations asking for changes in their relationship with the United States, in the last one with 54% expressing rejection for the territorial conditions. The responses from the President of the United States has been to propose a plebiscite that like the ones before, is placed outside of the International Law, it has no bonding force and the Secretary of Justice of the United States is the one who decides the status options that will be on the ballots.

In legislation in Puerto Rico four law projects have been presented to call for a Constitutional Assembly of Status with the goal of reaching a consensus about alternatives and to negotiate them with the United States as a sovereign body representative of the people of Puerto Rico.

This Committee can be instrumental in guaranteeing:

One, that the process of free determination is one initiated among the people of Puerto Rico acting as sovereign in accordance with international law, as is proposed in the Constitutional Assembly for Status projects,

Two, that as a previous condition to the process the Puerto Rican political prisoners Oscar López Rivera, Norberto Gonzalez Claudio and any other that exist at the moment be set free,

Three, that the process to educate the people about the options for decolonization in agreement with those recognized under international law be in the hands of the Committee or some organism specially created by the General Assembly of the UN for the supervision of the process,

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Four, that it previously ask the United States for the commitment to respect the decision of the people of Puerto Rico to choose options that do not require the approval of the Congress of the United States.

You have been entrusted with one of the noblest assignments that any country can aspire to carry out that honors the highest aspirations of humanity: the eradication of colonialism in the world.

Thank you very much.

Wilma E. Revéron Collazo

Co-president of the National Hostosiano Independence Movement

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Translated by Carmen I. Borges / MINH Communications