

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON BEHALF OF THE PUERTO RICO SUBCOMMITTEE
CALLING FOR RELEASE OF OSCAR LÓPEZ RIVERA
AND ALL PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**

WHEREAS, since the invasion of Puerto Rico by the United States in 1898, the United States has subjected Puerto Rico to the rule of U.S. law and the courts of the United States, as part of its colonial domination of Puerto Rico;

WHEREAS, Puerto Rico is the largest remaining colony of the United States and the oldest colony in the world;

WHEREAS, as part of maintaining its colonial control over Puerto Rico, the United States has prosecuted and imprisoned political prisoners who have fought for self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico and the sovereignty of their homeland;

WHEREAS, Puerto Rican political prisoners have been subjected to inordinately lengthy prison terms at prisons in the U.S. prison system, outside of Puerto Rico and at considerable distance from their families and supporters on the island;

WHEREAS, Oscar López Rivera, convicted of seditious conspiracy — not of any violent crime — and sentenced to 70 years in prison, has been incarcerated for over 31 years since May 1981, becoming the longest incarcerated political prisoner in the history of Puerto Rico;

WHEREAS, Oscar López Rivera has served more time than many convicted of violent offenses, and more time than many other political prisoners throughout the world, including former South African President and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Nelson Mandela;

WHEREAS, in 2011, the U.S. Parole Board unjustifiably denied parole to Oscar López Rivera, claiming they will revisit his parole request in 15 years when he will be 82 years old;

WHEREAS, all of his co-defendants have been released and are living productive, law-abiding lives, fully integrated into civil society;

WHEREAS, two other Puerto Rican political prisoners are currently incarcerated in the United States for their commitment to the independence of Puerto Rico: Avelino González Claudio, whose release is expected shortly; and Norberto González Claudio, whose release date is in approximately four years;

WHEREAS, it has been the practice of the United States to subject Puerto Rican political prisoners to harsh conditions of confinement and torture tactics, designating them as domestic terrorists;

WHEREAS, the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners has garnered widespread support in Puerto Rico, the United States and internationally;

WHEREAS, all sectors of the political spectrum in Puerto Rico support the release of Oscar López Rivera, including three former Governors, the current pro-statehood Resident Commissioner, many mayors and legislators in Puerto Rico, including those from the pro-Commonwealth and pro-statehood parties, professional groups such as the Colegio de Abogados, labor unions, religious institutions and civil society groups;

WHEREAS, renowned international figures such as Nobel Peace Prize winners Rigoberta Menchú and Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, and international leaders including Desmond Tutu, Daniel Ortega and Lula Da Silva, have called on the president of the United States to release Oscar López Rivera;

WHEREAS, support for Oscar López Rivera's release also includes several members of the U.S. House of Representatives, civic and religious leaders throughout the U.S., elected officials from New York, California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, as well as Puerto Rican and Latino communities and others who support human rights throughout the United States;

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama has the power to order the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners through the use of the constitutional power of pardon, as President Carter did in 1979 with five Puerto Rican Nationalist Party members who had served 25 and 29 years in U.S. prisons, and as President Clinton did in 1999 in his order releasing eleven Puerto Rican political prisoners held for 16 and 20 years in U.S. prisons;

WHEREAS, the National Lawyers Guild has a long history of solidarity with the movement for the independence of Puerto Rico;

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:

- The National Lawyers Guild (NLG) reaffirms its support for efforts to end the U.S. colonial regime in Puerto Rico;
- The NLG reiterates its call on President Barack Obama to order the immediate release of Oscar López Rivera, Norberto González Claudio and Avelino González Claudio;
- The International Committee, Task Force of the Americas, and the Puerto Rico Subcommittee will work to educate all NLG members about the colonial situation of Puerto Rico and the political prisoners who remain in U.S. prisons;
- The International Committee, Task Force of the Americas, and the Puerto Rico Subcommittee will work with and encourage NLG chapters and committees to obtain further resolutions from civic groups and political entities, in support of the release of Puerto Rico's

political prisoners from prisons in the United States.

Submitted for approval at the Annual Convention in Pasadena in October, 2012

Submitted by: Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan, Judith Berkan and Jan Susler (Co-Chairs, Puerto Rico Subcommittee of the International Committee; Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan, Jeanne Mirer and Susan Scott (Co-Chairs, International Committee); and Judy Somberg (Chair, Task Force of the Americas)

Implementation: International Committee, Task Force of the Americas, Puerto Rico Subcommittee