

Submitted by Susan Scott/IC: Resolution on NLG Solidarity with Puerto Rico

WHEREAS, Since the US invasion and occupation in 1898, the United States has subjected Puerto Rico, its largest colony, and the Puerto Rican people, to U.S. law and courts and the ongoing assault on their cultural, political and social institutions. The economy of Puerto Rico is controlled by the United States, and Puerto Rico's legitimate movement for self-determination and independence has been criminalized and repressed.

WHEREAS, The Guild has a long history of working with the Puerto Rican Independence Movement and makes an annual report to the U.N. Decolonization Committee hearings on Puerto Rico.

WHEREAS, Since January of 2009, a right-wing pro-statehood administration, aligned with the U.S. Republican Party, has waged a concerted effort to eliminate and repress all forces and institutions in Puerto Rican society which promote human rights and the defense of the legitimate aspirations of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination, and has launched major attacks against sectors such as the legal profession, workers, housing activists, defenders of Puerto Rican culture, and supporters of quality free and public education.

WHEREAS, In March 2010, the NLG International Committee sent a delegation to San Juan which met with human rights defenders from all sectors— law, labor, housing, education, culture and anti-military.

WHEREAS, the colonial administration is fiscally and legislatively attacking lawyers from the Puerto Rico Bar Association (Colegio de Abogados) for its advocacy and defense of the rights of the citizens of Puerto Rico to affordable housing, jobs and education, and its defense of Puerto Rican culture and the process of decolonization.

WHEREAS, the colonial administration is threatening to privatize public higher education and is physically attacking students and teachers who defend the right to education in a free and public university;

WHEREAS, the colonial administration is laying off thousands of government workers and waging unprecedented attacks on workers who defend their rights to their jobs and their unions;

WHEREAS, although Puerto Rican political prisoner Carlos Alberto Torres was released from U.S. prison in July of this year after serving 30 years, other Puerto Rican political prisoners remain imprisoned for their support of Puerto Rican independence: Oscar López Rivera, who has served 29 years, with a projected release date of 2027; and Avelino González Claudio.

WHEREAS, the U.N. Decolonization Committee this year passed its 29th annual resolution reaffirming the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly Resolution 1514(XV), recognizing Puerto Rico as a Latin American and Caribbean nation, requesting the General Assembly to consider the case of Puerto Rico, and calling on the U.S. to, *inter alia*, release the political prisoners held for over 28 years in U.S.

prisons, and clean up the toxic contaminants left by the U.S. Navy on the island of Vieques.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:

* The NLG reaffirms its support for efforts to end to U.S. colonial control of Puerto Rico and to obtain the independence and self-determination of the Puerto Rican people;

* Colegio de Abogados: The International Committee shall encourage NLG members and others to become honorary members of the Colegio de Abogados, shall initiate a campaign to encourage local U.S. Bar Associations to pass resolutions in solidarity with the Colegio de Abogados, and shall encourage NLG members to assist-- financially and through Amicus briefs -- in litigation in support of the Colegio de Abogados;

* Vieques: The International Committee shall encourage NLG members and others to assist -- financially and through Amicus briefs -- in litigation in support of the people of Vieques in their efforts to force the U.S. to clean up the Super Fund site left by the U.S. Navy;

* Housing: The International Committee shall encourage NLG members and others to assist -- financially and through Amicus briefs -- in litigation in support of the Caño Martín Peña land trust targeted by the colonial administration.

* Political prisoners: The International Committee shall encourage NLG members and others to support the campaign for the release of the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners;

*The International Committee agrees to send a copy of this Resolution to the Governor of Puerto Rico, the Presidents of Puerto Rico's Senate and House of Representatives; the Colegio de Abogados; and the President and Secretary of State of the United States.

Implementation by the International Committee.

Submitted by Susan Scott, Jeanne Mirer, and Azadeh Shahshahani, Co-Chairs of the International Committee; and Jan Susler, Judy Berkan and Natasha Bannan of the Puerto Rico Subcommittee ; and Judy Somberg of the Task Force on the Americas. Endorsed by the International Committee.