



PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS

**13th General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas
and 12th Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the
Americas**

November 5, 2014

Asunción, Paraguay

**RESOLUTION ASKING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA, THE HONOURABLE BARACK OBAMA, TO SHOW MERCY AND
RELEASE PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONER OSCAR LÓPEZ RIVERA**

**Presented by Puerto Rican Senators
Antonio J. Fas Alzamora and Ángel Rodríguez Otero**

CONSIDERING that Oscar López Rivera, a staunch supporter and ardent advocate of Puerto Rican independence, has been imprisoned in the United States for more than 33 years and that, in recent years, more and more people inside and outside Puerto Rico have been requesting that the 71-year-old political prisoner be released;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that, on May 29, 1981, Oscar López Rivera was arrested on charges of seditious conspiracy, for which he was later convicted. These charges were brought against him following allegations of conspiracy to overthrow the United States government, which were based on his involvement with the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN – Spanish acronym), an organization located in Chicago whose objective is to achieve Puerto Rican independence;

GIVEN that Oscar López Rivera has never been accused of a violent crime or of causing harm to anyone, but was nevertheless sentenced to 55 years in jail and then given an additional 15 years for allegedly attempting to escape;

CONSIDERING that Oscar López Rivera is the longest-held political prisoner and that he has spent 12 of his 33 years in jail in solitary confinement;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that, in 1999, former U.S. President Bill Clinton pardoned 11 of Oscar López Rivera's co-accused after almost two decades of imprisonment; Oscar López Rivera refused to be released out of solidarity for his

compatriots Carlos Alberto Torres and Haydeé Beltrán, who had not been pardoned at the time, but have since been set free;

GIVEN that Oscar López Rivera, who is currently serving his sentence in a federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, United States, would have to remain in jail for 9 more years before being eligible for parole, at age 80;

CONSIDERING that Oscar López Rivera has undoubtedly served more than enough time, especially given that he was convicted under the controversial anti-sedition legislation;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the release of Oscar López Rivera is a question of justice and human rights, as he has been deprived of freedom for too long and does not deserve to be wrongfully imprisoned for even one more day;

CONSIDERING that, as the United States of America has traditionally championed human rights the world over, it must set an example and release Oscar López Rivera;

KNOWING that Antonio J. Fas Alzamora, who is the longest-serving Puerto Rican Senator in the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico (38 years) and has also been a member of COPA since it was founded, has written to President Obama to ask him to release his fellow countryman, Oscar López Rivera, whose fighting spirit, determination and unwavering faith in his principles are an example for all Puerto Ricans;

KNOWING that Senator Fas Alzamora, former President of the Senate of Puerto Rico, also sent a letter to Pope Francis, asking him to raise this issue at his March 2014 meeting with President Obama;

GIVEN that the release of Oscar López Rivera would be considered a genuine, moral commitment to freedom, which is sought by all who are persecuted for their political or religious beliefs;

CONSIDERING that if we, the people who cherish freedom and defend human rights, praise the achievements and sacrifices of Nelson Mandela, who was not imprisoned for as long as Oscar López Rivera, then we must also ask that Oscar López Rivera be released immediately;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the ideological, social and religious differences observed in Puerto Rico have never prevented people of all walks of life from demanding the release of Oscar López Rivera, and that the Puerto Rican people and its leaders have consistently reiterated their desire to see him set free;

GIVEN that a number of Nobel Peace Prize winners support this request, notably: Rigoberta Menchú, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and South African bishop Desmond Tutu, along with the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, which has presented resolutions to that effect;

CONSIDERING that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Governor, Alejandro García Padilla, and its Legislative Assembly have indicated that they support Oscar López Rivera's release;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that all political parties in Puerto Rico and their respective presidents also want him to be set free;

GIVEN that the Puerto Rican Bar Association and citizens', cultural and human rights institutions have shown their support for Oscar López Rivera's release;

CONSIDERING that parliamentarians play a key role in the upholding of justice and protection of human rights;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), through its General Assembly, acknowledges that upholding justice and protecting citizens' rights is essential;

CONSEQUENTLY, it is resolved to ask the President of the United States of America, the Honourable Barack Obama, to show mercy and release Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera immediately.

CONSEQUENTLY, the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) will send a copy of this resolution to the Honourable Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, and to all national and international media, so that it may be widely distributed.