



National Boricua Human Rights Network

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Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Re: Oscar López Rivera
87651-024, FCI Terre Haute

Dear President Obama,

We write to ask you to release Oscar López Rivera from prison. He has served 31 years for his commitment to the independence of Puerto Rico. He was not convicted of harming or killing anyone, yet he is serving a sentence of 70 years. When you compare his sentence to what the media termed “stiff” and “lengthy” sentences of 38 to 65 years given this year to New Orleans police officers convicted of shooting, harming and killing innocent, unarmed civilians in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, there is no doubt that his sentence is disproportionate, and politically punitive.

Three U.S. presidents have exercised the constitutional power of pardon to commute the sentences of men and women in U.S. prisons for Puerto Rican independence: President Truman in 1952, President Carter in 1979, and President Clinton in 1999. We are mindful that all of Mr. López’ co-defendants have been released, and most of them live in Puerto Rico, where they are well-respected, productive members of our civil society. They are not the first generation of pro-independence prisoners to carry themselves with such dignity.

We are always hopeful when we hear expressions by your administration that political prisoners in other countries should be released, as we eagerly await application of this policy to Oscar López Rivera’s case right here at home. For example, we recall that last December, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Burma and expressed, on behalf of the U.S. government: “We believe that any political prisoner anywhere should be released. One political prisoner is one too many in our view.”

We hope that you will breathe life into these words of Mrs. Clinton and commute the lengthy sentence of our brother Oscar López Rivera, and grant him immediate release. People of conscience in this country and around the world, such as Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, as well as the United Nations Decolonization Committee, will welcome him home with open arms.

Yours truly,

Name

Address

City, State and Zip

E-Mail