



National Boricua Human Rights Network

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May 2, 2011

Isaac Fulwood, Jr., Chair
United States Parole Commission
5550 Friendship Boulevard, Suite 420
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

via facsimile 301/492-5543

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

Dear Chairman Fulwood, and Commissioners Mitchell, Cushwa and Wilson Smoot:

We write to ask you to reconsider your decision to deny parole to Oscar López Rivera, who is serving a 70 year sentence for his commitment to the independence of Puerto Rico. The U.S. Parole Commission has likely never had a case similar to his, with such overwhelming evidence to warrant granting immediate parole.

In what other case has an entire nation, in one united voice, supported parole, as Puerto Rico did here?

In what other case has a president of the United States already declared that the sentence was disproportionate, and that he should have been released by September of 2009?

In what other case have 11 co-defendants accumulated eleven years of exemplary conduct after their release?

In what other case has the very same Parole Commission granted early termination of conditions to those co-defendants?

In what other case has the very same Parole Commission granted parole to the only other remaining co-defendant, only six months before the hearing in this case, after he served 30 years in prison?

In what other case has the Commission received tens of thousands of letters of support, including from so many elected officials, clergy and religious organizations, legal and human rights groups, and people who seek justice?

In what other case has the Commission had such conclusive proof meeting the criteria for release?

Yet, you ruled that because of several factors, his “release on parole would promote disrespect for the law,” apparently ceding to forces opposed to his parole, who insist that he is responsible for a 1975 New York City bombing for which he was neither accused nor convicted, and in which he did not participate.

We ask you to reconsider what promotes disrespect for the law. The effect of your ruling is that this 68 year old decorated Vietnam veteran, with a distinguished record of service to his community, will be required to serve 45 years behind bars, when he was not convicted of harming anyone or taking a life — in other words, cruel and unusual punishment. No other country in the world holds people in prison for almost half a century.

It is not too late for you to fulfill your mission, “to promote public safety and to strive for justice and fairness in the exercise of [your] authority to release and supervise offenders under [your] jurisdiction,” by ordering the immediate parole of Mr. López Rivera.

Very truly yours,

SIGNATURE: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

NAME: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____