

NO KINGS, NO COLONIES, FREE PUERTO RICO

The United States is preparing to celebrate 250 years of independence on July 4, 2026. That story is incomplete. Puerto Rico has been under U.S. colonial rule since 1898. Millions of people live without full political rights, without control over their economy, and without the ability to determine their own future. On July 4, 2026, we are gathering in Chicago and across the United States to challenge the official narrative of freedom and to demand Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and independence.

FAQS

Is Puerto Rico a U.S. colony?

- Puerto Rico has been a U.S. colony since 1898. After the Spanish-American War, the U.S. seized Puerto Rico without the consent of the Puerto Rican people.
- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Balzac v. People of Puerto Rico* (1922) that Puerto Rico 'belongs to but is not part of' the United States.
- The U.S. government controls Puerto Rico economically, militarily, and judicially through the Territorial Clause — an extra-constitutional framework that gives Congress plenary power without full democratic representation.
- Although Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens since 1917, those living on the island cannot vote for president, senators, or members of Congress. They have no representation in the federal government that governs them.

How has colonial rule affected Puerto Ricans?

- Puerto Rico has endured over 128 years of colonial expropriation, exploitation, and experimentation at the hands of U.S. economic, military, and political interests.
- Puerto Rico's economy has been made almost entirely dependent on the United States — historically oriented toward export or tourism. As a result, Puerto Rico imports 85% of what it consumes and cannot establish trade relations with any other country. It produces what it doesn't consume. It consumes what it doesn't produce.
- Over 43% of the island lives in poverty. One-third of residents are food insecure. The unemployment rate consistently runs nearly double that of the mainland.
- Puerto Ricans have been used as a source of low-wage labor for U.S. industries, and their lands have been confiscated for U.S. military use and exercises.
- Puerto Ricans were used as test subjects for birth control treatments, sometimes without public consent. At one time, 32% of Puerto Rican women of childbearing age had been sterilized.
- U.S. authorities have systematically repressed Puerto Rican demands for self-determination and independence — through sophisticated surveillance, incarceration, political violence, and assassination.

How has the U.S. used Puerto Rico to advance U.S. imperialism in Latin America?

- The United States established major military bases in Puerto Rico. Roosevelt Roads was the largest U.S. Navy base in the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. military seized Vieques and used it for tropical warfare training for more than six decades.
- U.S. radars in Puerto Rico monitor the Caribbean and South America. Puerto Rican waters have been used to store nuclear submarines.
- Puerto Rico has been a launching pad for U.S. military operations in the Dominican Republic, Panama, Grenada, and Venezuela.
- U.S. control over Puerto Rico has served as a model for Washington's domination of other Latin American nations.

How does U.S. colonialism manifest today in Puerto Rico?

- In 2016, Congress imposed PROMESA, creating an unelected Financial Oversight and Management Board (La Junta) to control Puerto Rico's economy and manage its debt. La Junta has enforced fiscal austerity and privatization, cutting healthcare, reducing University of Puerto Rico funding by more than 50%, and gutting pensions for public workers — all without democratic accountability.
- Tax incentives under Act 60 (formerly Acts 20 and 22) have enabled outside investors to acquire prime real estate, driving up housing costs and displacing Puerto Rican families from their homes and communities.
- The Trump administration's escalation of military intervention in the hemisphere — including in Venezuela — has reactivated Puerto Rico's geopolitical role for U.S. interests. The U.S. military has expanded training on the island, with active talks about reopening facilities in Ceiba and near Vieques.
- Puerto Rico's colonially-driven economic decline over the past two decades triggered mass outmigration comparable to the 1950s and 1960s waves. Today, more than 5.6 million Puerto Ricans live in the U.S. Only 3.2 million remain on the island.

What about Chicago and July 4, 2026?

- The Chicago metro area is home to more than 206,000 Puerto Ricans — one of the largest concentrations outside the island.
- Humboldt Park, known as Barrio Borikén, has been a center of Puerto Rican political organizing for generations.
- 2026 marks the 60th anniversary of the Division Street Riots, sparked by the death of Cruz Arcelis at the hands of a Chicago Police officer. That moment catalyzed Puerto Rican political organizing in Chicago and shaped what came after.
- On July 4, 2026 — as the U.S. marks 250 years of declared independence — we will gather to demand that story includes Puerto Rico. Not as a footnote. As a test.

Why should we support Puerto Rican independence and self-determination?

- The U.S. invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 and has never stopped exploiting the island's people, land, and military geography for its own interests.
- When Americans demonstrate opposition to this colonial arrangement from within, we show Puerto Ricans and countries around the world that this is not being done in our name.
- Supporting Puerto Rican sovereignty is not charity. It is democratic accountability. U.S. citizens benefit from and bear responsibility for a colonial structure built in their name.
- Supporting Puerto Rico's right to self-determination is supporting the sovereignty of people everywhere. Freedom and sovereignty are human rights — or they are for no one.
- Defending democracy in the United States must include demanding an end to U.S. colonialism. You cannot celebrate freedom while ruling a colony.

What are we asking you to do?

- Show up. Join us in Chicago on July 4, 2026.
- Give. Donate to fund this campaign and the organizations doing this work.
- Amplify. Share information about No Kings, No Colonies, with your networks, platforms, and audiences.
- Advocate. Contact your elected officials. Puerto Rico's political status is a U.S. government decision — and U.S. voters have standing to demand it change.
- Organize. Bring this to your community, congregation, union, campus, or institution.