

XXV Congress of the Socialist International
Cartagena, 2-3-4 March 2017

DECLARATION ON PUERTO RICO

Original: Spanish

From the moment in which the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) joined the Socialist International (SI) in the Albufeira Congress in 1983, the SI categorically expressed its support for the independence of Puerto Rico. By doing this, in spite of the big pressures put onto them at that time when the Cold War had reached its peak, the SI honoured its commitment to its principles and to the cause of decolonisation and the right of peoples to their self-determination and independence.

As from that point in time, the SI has reiterated on many occasions their support for Independence and has expressed its views on the developments that have marked the course of events in Puerto Rico. Today, we are especially satisfied to be able to celebrate that the then President Obama listened to the world's voice –including the demands made by the SI – and finally decided just a few weeks ago, to free the Puerto Rican fighter for independence Oscar López Rivera who had been in jail for more than thirty five years accused of the crime of seditious conspiracy.

During the years since the Congress in Albufeira, the solidarity of the SI with the Puerto Rican Independence Party and with the cause of Puerto Rican independence has taken different forms among which there are the testimonials of the current SI President and of several Chairs of the Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (SICLAC) before the Special Committee on Decolonisation of the United Nations, and the continuous election as from 2000 in the Paris Congress of Rubén Berríos Martínez, President of the PIP, as an Honorary President of the SI.

In the year of 2016, after ten years of an overwhelming economic depression originated by the inability of the colonial model to promote economic growth, the loss of more than 10 per cent of the population due to an unbridled migration, and the declared insolvency of the national treasury, the United States Congress has unilaterally decided to resume direct control of the government of Puerto Rico, reducing even more the meagre spaces of self-government of the colonial territory.

Instead of responding to the claims expressed in a referendum in 2012 in which a clear majority of the electorate manifested to be against the continuation of the colonial regime, the reply of Congress has been to create a Board of Fiscal Supervision, appointed by the President of the United States, to exercise all-embracing powers over any legal or executive decision of an economic or fiscal nature by the government of Puerto Rico, and to be able to impose their criteria over the elected officials of the Puerto Rican government.

Just in case that anyone had any doubts about the powers of the Congress to approve such a control mechanism, the US Supreme Court, on the same day (9 June 2016) in which the Congress approved the law for the creation of the Board of Supervision, issued an historical decision, in line with the request of the US President, that affirms the plenary powers of Congress to govern Puerto Rico, and reaffirming that Puerto Rico is nothing more than a possession of the USA in

which any partial concession of self-government may be revoked unilaterally by the Congress, at its sole discretion.

Considering these dangerous and worrying developments, the SI Congress meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, agrees the following:

1. To reiterate our support for the inalienable right of the People of Puerto Rico to their self-determination and Independence in accordance with Resolution 1514 (XV) of the United Nations.
 2. To urge the Government and the Congress of the United States to fully comply with their decolonising obligations in relation to Puerto Rico and not to hinder in any way the celebration of a plebiscite convened by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico among the alternatives contemplated in Resolution 1541 (XV) of the United Nations.
 3. To support the repeated claims made by the Decolonisation Committee of the United Nations that the General Assembly of the United Nations fully examine the case of Puerto Rico and pronounce itself on the matter.
 4. To congratulate the Puerto Rican Independence Party on its perseverance defending the cause of independence and the political and ethical values of social democracy, and to express their trust that the political initiatives carried out by the PIP will help to set in motion a process that will finally take Puerto Rico towards its decolonisation and independence.
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