

Venezuela Tells U.S. to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera



Santo Domingo, June 14 (RHC)-- Venezuelan Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez called on the United States to free Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera at the first day of meetings with the General Assembly of the Organization of American States on Tuesday.

Serving his 35th year in prison, Lopez Rivera, who is a leader in the Puerto Rico independence movement, is the longest-held political prisoner from Latin America in U.S. history. Puerto Ricans revived the call for his release with marches last month pressuring U.S. President Barack Obama to pardon him in his last year in office. Caracas has also participated in solidarity marches, and Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders repeated the demand when he visited Puerto Rico while on the campaign trail.

The Venezuelan foreign minister also demanded an end to the economic blockade of Cuba and echoed the call by the Dominican Republic, where the meetings are hosted, for the OAS to apologize for the U.S. invasion and occupation of the island in 1965. She said that the Dominican Republic was "victim" to the U.S. invasion and that "the wounds have still not healed."

She added that Venezuela is currently a “victim of international bullying by the right” and that onslaughts against the country’s sovereignty are “unacceptable.”

“The right is treating Venezuela like a banquet dish,” said Rodriguez. The recall referendum, she said, is being handled as the constitution dictates, pushing away criticism that has instigated right-wing violence in the streets.

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