

Calle 13's "Residente" Demands Obama Release Oscar Lopez



Washington, December 12 (RHC)-- Rene Perez, known as "Residente," a singer with the internationally-renowned band Calle 13, demanded before the U.S. Senate that Washington release political prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera, who has been in U.S. custody for 35 years for fighting for his country's independence from U.S. colonial rule.

The action was attended by Illinois Senator Luis Gutierrez, San Juan's mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz, Puerto Rico's representatives Luis Vega and Manuel Natal, as well as the political prisoner's daughter and brother Clarissa Lopez Ramos and Jose Lopez Rivera and was organized by Vermont Senator and former presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

The singer told EFE that if Lopez was released by the end of the current administration on January 20, Barack Obama had the opportunity to make history by releasing the longest-held political prisoner in the United States. Moreover, he added, the chances that President-elect Donald Trump would yield to the demand were very small.

"Oscar Lopez Rivera is braver than George Washington, because he fought for his country's independence without having a majority backing him... Every second he spends in prison makes him a bigger hero."

The White House is expected to give an answer about the case soon, as required by a petition signed by over 100,000 people, including Puerto Rico's current and former governors Alejandro Garcia Padilla and Ricardo Rossello, as well as "Residente" and pop singer Ricky Martin.

Lopez Rivera is a leader in the Puerto Rico independence movement. He declined the clemency offered by former president Bill Clinton in 1999 because it was not extended to all who were detained with him.

At 73, he is currently serving his 35th year in prison on charges related to his independence activities with the Armed Forces of National Liberation, which fought to liberate Puerto Rico from the United States, which has held the island as a colony since 1898.

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