

# *Oscar López Rivera Receives Hero's Welcome in New York City Puerto Rican Day Parade*

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New York, June 12 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of people attended New York City's 60th National Puerto Rican Day Parade Sunday, where freed Puerto Rican revolutionary Oscar Lopez Rivera appeared to loud cheers as he shouted: "Que Viva Puerto Rico!" on the first float leading the parade down Fifth Avenue in New York City.

Oscar Lopez Rivera was freed last month after serving 36 years in prison. Former U.S. President Barack Obama commuted his sentence earlier this year.

The first Puerto Rican Day Parade took place in 1958, just a year after it became legal to display the flag or other nationalist symbolism in Puerto Rico. A nearly decade-long gag rule beginning in the late 1940s aimed to suppress the independence movement.

In other news, Puerto Rico held a controversial referendum on its political status on Sunday. The majority of those who cast ballots supported Puerto Rico becoming the 51st state. However, only 23 percent of eligible voters took part, because many Puerto Rican opposition parties boycotted the vote.

The referendum has no legal power to affect the status of Puerto Rico, which has been a U.S. colony for over 100 years.

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