



¡El Coqui Libre!

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The Newsletter of The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign-Published in New York City

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GIANT PRO-INDEPENDENCE IMAGES WERE PROJECTED ON THE WALLS OF THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN NYC!

NEW YORK, NY, February 18 — EL FRENTE INDEPENDENTISTA BORICUA ([Boricua Independence Front](#)), a coalition of pro-independence organizations and individuals in the United States, held its monthly protest in front of the United Nations headquarters. Previously, the group had been announced a creative component to the rally, but the dramatic illumination of lights against the United Nations building took many by surprise.

"This afternoon, as we have done every third Monday of the month, we carried out a successful picket and information material was distributed in front of the United Nations, demanding that the organization assume a proactive role in the colonial case of Puerto Rico. Once it was night, from 6 pm, gigantic images began to be projected on the United Nations headquarters wall, demanding freedom and denouncing the colonial situation of Puerto Rico," Expressed Eric Ramos, spokesperson of the Boricua Independence Front.

Today's event was a collaboration between the Boricua Independence Front, the Puerto Rican graphic artist Luis Cordero Santoni and the organization The Illuminator, he continued expressing. For almost half an hour they were projecting gigantic images alluding to the illegality of the colonialism, which demanded freedom for our prisoners and prisoners, independence for Puerto Rico and highlighting the exalted figure of Lolita Lebrón, a Puerto Rican patriot who celebrated her centenary, affirmed Professor Norma Pérez, another spokesperson.



Two of the various statements projected onto the UN on Monday, February 18th, 2019.

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"The excellent coordination of the event allowed us to mobilize with the necessary haste to the site of the screening, after having sustained a combative picket at the Ralph Bunche Park was excellent," continued Professor Pérez.

The Boricua Independence Front is committed to exert all the necessary pressure in the United States and before the international community to achieve the goal of a free and sovereign Puerto Rican homeland. The situation prevailing in our country, a victim of the dictatorship of a Fiscal Board that only distributes misery and narrowness, the attempt to use Puerto Rico for military aggressions of fraternal peoples and the generalized deterioration of civil and labor rights in Puerto Rico require actions forceful and novel.

The Boricua Independence Front was established in New York City with the purpose of uniting the patriotic forces of the Puerto Rican diáspora and is made up of the following organizations. Join Us!

Boricua Independence Front member organizations: A Call to Action on Puerto Rico, Comités de la Resistencia Boricua, Comité Oscar-Mandela, Comité PIP NY, Frente Socialista NY, Partido Nacionalista (Junta de Nueva York y Junta de New Jersey), Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Puertorriqueños (PRTP-Macheteros), Patria y Cultura, ProLibertad, Virtual Boricua & others.

SADLY, PUERTO RICO RECOVERY PLAN FAVORS THE AFFLUENT AND OVER THE POOR!

By Ariadna M. Godreau-Aubert, opinion contributor — 02/21/19 02:30 PM EST [37](#)

<https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/430987-sadly-puerto-rico-recovery-plan-favors-the-affluent-over-the-poor>

Nearly a year and a half after Hurricanes Irma and Maria slammed into Puerto Rico, federal funds will soon be available to restore the island's decimated housing, economy and infrastructure. In early February, HUD [released \\$1.5 billion](#) of roughly \$20 billion in funding earmarked for that purpose through its Community Development Block Grant — Disaster Recovery Program. That's good news.

The bad news is that — unless the right policies are in place — that funding could actually hurt the Puerto Ricans most in need of help.

Take housing, for example. Gov. Ricardo Rosselló has sketched out an Action Plan to use these grant funds to rebuild the more than [350,000 homes damaged by the storms](#). But, as Michael Kimmelman observes in [The New York Times](#), there's a catch: "Because of federal regulations, those living in flood-prone areas won't be given any public money unless their homes comply with flood-protection standards." Impoverished Puerto Ricans can't afford to comply with those regulations — by elevating houses, employing licensed contractors,



Poor communities in Puerto Rico are still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

providing wheelchair access and more — so they will be denied federal funding to fix their homes.

It's not the first time Puerto Rico's hurricane survivors were denied federal aid. Many islanders live in homes that were built by hand and passed down through the generations. [Nearly half](#) of these homeowners lack clear titles to their properties. In the aftermath of the storms, FEMA wrongly required homeowners to present formal titles in order to access emergency funds. As a result, of the 1.1 million households who

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Puerto Rico faces a housing crisis without precedent. Punishing [austerity policies](#), combined with rising inequality and poverty, have left thousands of families facing eviction and foreclosure. The disasters have made existing problems much worse. Denied federal assistance, many face a choice between staying in their ruined homes or becoming homeless.

In some cases, staying is not even an option. Rosselló's proposal seeks to relocate neighborhoods at risk of flooding. Here, too, the most vulnerable stand to lose everything, because the standard of risk is applied unevenly. For example, the poor, predominantly black community of Loiza has been deemed a flood risk, while just down the coast, the affluent, mostly white tourist town of Condado is regarded as "safe." [Ayuda Legal Puerto Rico](#) has identified nearly 100 communities at risk for displacement under this inequitable standard.

What should we make of a rebuilding plan helps the affluent and hurts the poor? Sadly, it fits with other policies at play in Puerto Rico today. Following the [disaster capitalism](#) playbook used in New Orleans after Katrina, local and federal officials are promoting tourism and gentrification, and luring foreign investors by granting generous tax exemptions and asking nothing in return. Community Development Block Grant — Disaster Recovery Program funds could provide the capital necessary to pursue this misguided plan.

But it doesn't have to be this way. To make sure that federal funding helps all Puerto Ricans — especially the most vulnerable — we must:

Adapt regulations to the local context. Importantly, create a clear process that enables people

without traditional title to apply for rebuilding assistance. And make sure grants include enough money to cover the costs of elevation or moving to somewhere where elevation is not needed.

Minimize displacement. Federal regulations require Community Development Block Grant — Disaster Recovery Program action plans to include a displacement minimization policy and to consider mitigation — protecting the rights of people to stay in their homes when possible and respecting their right to dignified housing. These are absent in Puerto Rico's draft plan. Instead, the government has promoted policies that facilitate displacement.

Ensure transparency and informed consent. Communities slated for relocation must be informed and consulted, as required by international human rights law. The government should guarantee that communities can enforce their right to stay or leave, with fully informed consent.

Apply a racial equity lens. Many communities in Puerto Rico are at risk of flooding, but only those that are home to poor people of color are now slated for relocation. It is essential to challenge the racism at the heart of this policy. In addition to understanding vulnerability, we must also recognize the strengths inherent in each community — especially the [social ties](#) that enable people to be resilient in the face of disaster.

Access to federal funds is essential to help Puerto Rico recover from the Island's [deadliest natural disaster in the last](#) 100 years. But, as the money begins to flow, we must ask, "Puerto Rico for whom?" The current plan will rebuild for tourists and those in affluent coastal communities, while overlooking the needs of low-income people of color. It is not too late to make sure that this much-needed investment in Puerto Rico helps those who need it the most.

Ariadna M. Godreau-Aubert is a human rights lawyer, coordinator of the Access to Justice Working Group and the executive director of Ayuda Legal Puerto Rico, Inc. Godreau-Aubert is also an adjunct professor at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, where she teaches courses on human rights, political theory and international relations. Her 2018 book, "Las propias: Apuntes para una pedagogía de las endeudadas," offers a feminist approach to the Island's debt crisis

**LOLITA LEBRÓN:
CELEBRACIÓN EN SU CENTENARIO
DE HEROINA PUERTORRIQUEÑA**

PLENA COMBATIVA de PUERTO RICO

Centennial Celebration of Lolita Lebrón,
Puerto Rican heroine
MISA ESPECIAL/Special Mass
Iglesia Santa Cruz, 175 West 179th Street
Viernes, 22 de marzo, 2019 @ 8:30pm
"La Espiritualidad Liberadora de Lolita Lebrón"- por
Rev. Luis Barrios
Presentación Cultural : Plena Combativa de Puerto Rico,
Poesía de Mariposa y Zeldeth Hatch Diaz

Sponsors: Iglesia Santa Cruz, Las Lallias de NYC y Frente Independientista Boricua



PROLIBERTAD RESOURCE PAGE:

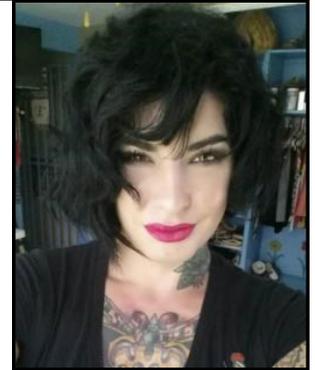
SIGN THE PETITION TO FREE NINA DROZ FRANCO:

<https://www.change.org/p/libertad-para-nina-droz-franco>

SEND A LETTER TO THE U.N. HIGH COMMISSIONER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENEVA FOR ANA BELEN MONTES:

<http://www.prolibertad.org/u-n-campaign-for-ana-belen>

SEND NINA DROZ FRANCO A LETTER, CARD, OR POSTCARD:



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JOIN THE PROLIBERTAD FREEDOM CAMPAIGN:

You have the power to free Nina and Ana.
Join ProLibertad and help us:

- Organize a community workshop;
- Put together a letter writing night;
- Dedicate a mass to the prisoners.

**Come to one of our meetings!
Contact us at 718-601-4751!**



ProLibertad Freedom Campaign

For over 20 years, the ProLibertad Freedom Campaign has been working for the release of the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners. With the release of 11 of the Political Prisoners in September 1999, we re-dedicated our efforts to securing the freedom of the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners. Through educational events, lobbying and public pressure work and activities it is our goal to secure the freedom of these patriots whose only "crime" has been the love of their home land, Puerto Rico. We support the release of All U.S.

held Political Prisoners, oppose the U.S. colonial control of Puerto Rico, oppose U.S. imperialism throughout the world, and the U.S. military presence in Vieques. For more information **Contact us at:**
ProLibertad@Hotmail.com, at 718-601-4751, or our website www.ProLibertad.org