Cuba Defends Puerto Rico's Right to Independence

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It also expresses concern over its Financial Oversight and Management Board, instituted by the U.S. Congress, in response to the devastating economic crisis on the island. Rodriguez added that on July 25, Puerto Rico will have been a U.S. colony for 119 years.

Despite over a century of colonial rule that's been hotly contested by independence activists every step of the way, the people of Puerto Rico have not ceded their culture, identity, or national sentiments to integrate within the hegemonic matrix of the U.S. Many attest that they don't feel nor associate themselves with being U.S. citizens.

Puerto Rico's quest for independence received a major boost on May 17 when Oscar Lopez Rivera was released from the U.S. prison system after having spent over 35 years behind bars for participating in the island's independence struggle.

During his trial, Lopez Rivera and other activists told the court their actions were part of an anti-colonial war against the U.S., declaring themselves prisoners of war and requesting that their cases be handed over to an international court.

Once that request was turned down Rivera largely ignored the proceedings, arguing that his actions were legal under the Geneva Conventions which recognized the right to armed struggle against colonial occupation.

Now, at 74, Lopez Rivera has stated that whatever time he has left he will “dedicate to work and fight to help solve the biggest problem we face: the colonial status of Puerto Rico.”

On Monday, Lopez made his appeal to the U.N. Decolonization Committee, emphasizing that Puerto Rico “needs help” in order to “put an end to colonization” at the hands of the U.S., adding that “colonialism is a crime against humanity.”