


---

# Proclaim Release!

*A Call to Conscience and Action  
for the Release of  
Puerto Rican Political Prisoners*

 *By the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project  
3rd Edition*

---

---

The Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project (IPOC) is an interfaith ministry with prisoners of conscience held in U.S. prisons. We seek to provide pastoral care and support for these prisoners, and to advocate for their fair treatment and release, especially in light of the extremely harsh prison conditions and long sentences they have endured.

Executive Director:  
Rev. Dr. S. Michael Yasutake  
2120 Lincoln St.  
Evanston, IL 60201  
(847) 328-1543 phone/fax  
MYasutake@aol.com

Additional copies of this resource are available from the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project and from the organizations listed on the inside back cover.

---

# Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project

## Preface

Charity projects, providing direct services to the needy, are worthy and valuable. But we also need systemic change which eliminates poverty and the need for charity work altogether.

Prisoners of conscience, more commonly known as “political prisoners,” have sided with the powerless and the poor. They are being perse-

cuted for challenging systemic injustice. In many cases, laws have been used illegally to convict them. More frightening, laws are made and enforced to benefit those in power at the expense of the powerless.

The Puerto Rican prisoners of conscience are among those who have worked for a just society, at great

sacrifice to themselves and their loved ones. The Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project (IPOC) and other supporting organizations extend this call to all people to join in the common struggle for justice.

*The Rev. Dr. S. Michael Yasutake*  
Executive Director

---

*Although work with “political prisoners” was among the expectations when I began my ministry at the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, it took me over a year to summon the courage to find out how to visit a political prisoner. Driving up to a compound surrounded by razor wire and stepping through a gate which clangs behind one is not an easy thing to do. Frankly, I wasn’t sure what to expect. What I found changed my life.*

My first visit was with four Puerto Rican women at the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Dublin, California — Dylcia Pagán, Lucy Rodríguez, Carmen Valentín, and United Church of Christ member Alejandrina Torres (who is now at FCI Danbury, Connecticut). These were profoundly impressive women of gentle courage, strength, and integrity. My visit with them moved me to meet some of their compatriots — Edwin Cortés at the United States Penitentiary (USP) in Terre Haute, Indiana; Oscar López Rivera at the super-maximum prison in Florence, Colorado (now at the USP in Marion, Illinois);

Adolfo Matos at the USP in Lompoc, California; Ricardo Jiménez and Alberto Rodríguez at USP Lewisburg in Pennsylvania; Antonio Camacho Negrón at FCI Allenwood in Pennsylvania; Alicia Rodríguez at Dwight Correctional Center in Illinois (now at FCI Dublin); and Luis Rosa at Stateville Prison in Illinois (now at USP Leavenworth in Kansas). In each case, I encountered men and women vibrant with life and love, whose eyes sparkle with vision and hope despite all they have already suffered and the terribly long sentences — as long as 105 years for Luis — which they are continuing to serve. Although these

sentences seem harsh in the abstract form of the printed page, they are simply horrifying for those who have been privileged to meet the actual people who are enduring them. A peculiar form of outrage seeps into one’s bones, calling forth a commitment to do all one can to secure their release.

These prisoners’ friends, families, and community have mounted an energetic campaign for their freedom. They have sent thousands of letters and faxes to the President, urging him to grant them amnesty, and have been joined in this appeal by legislators, artists and religious leaders, including, most recently, Coretta Scott King and Desmond Tutu. With all their hearts, they — and I — urge you to join in the effort to free these remarkable men and women.

*The Rev. C. Nozomi Ikuta*  
Chair

---

---

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

*— Luke 4:18-19*

---

---

## ***For over seventeen years, Puerto Rican men and women have been imprisoned***

*throughout the U.S. because of their beliefs and actions in support of Puerto Rican independence. They are serving extremely long sentences (35-105 years) — far longer than the sentences meted out to others for heinous activities<sup>1</sup> — and many of them have suffered unusually harsh treatment while in prison, including physical assault and extended periods of solitary confinement — conditions condemned by Amnesty International. Puerto Ricans throughout the US and Puerto Rico from all political sectors have called for their release. Now these prisoners — and the families and communities they have left behind — appeal to us, as Christians, to join in the growing effort to “proclaim release to the captives.”*

In 1991, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ said:

*The Scriptures commit us to bring to your attention the cry for justice and mercy from our Puerto Rican prisoners who are subjected to discriminatory treatment from the prison officials. Because we are called by Christ to bring the good news to the captives and to preach release to the oppressed, we have a responsibility to improve the prison conditions of the Puerto Rican prisoners and to eliminate the colonial condition of the Puerto Rican people...*

*The Eighteenth General Synod demands that President Bush and*

*the Congress undertake a process for Puerto Ricans to achieve self-determination and, as a gesture of good will, take the following steps, which are part of any legitimate process of self-determination:*

- *grant immediate and unconditional amnesty to all Puerto Rican prisoners of conscience and political prisoners...*

This resolution was the fifth of six statements supporting Puerto Rican and other political prisoners adopted by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ from 1979-1995.<sup>2</sup>

---

### **HOW HAVE THE CHURCHES RESPONDED?**

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, THE BAPTIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP, THE GENERAL BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, AND THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF PUERTO RICO HAVE ALL CALLED FOR THE RELEASE OF THESE PRISONERS.

---

---

1. Their average sentence is 65.4 years — or about six times longer than the average murder sentence.

The disproportionate sentencing is discussed further on page 9.

2. The full text of these resolutions is provided in Appendix E.

---

In 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church said:

*The United Nations' resolutions on decolonization have clearly established that colonialism is a crime and recognize a colonized people's right to end colonialism. The United Nations also recognizes that these resolutions and laws apply to Puerto Rico. For many years, the United Nations Decolonization Committee has approved resolutions recognizing the inalienable right of Puerto Rico's people to independence and self-determination. The injustice suffered under Puerto Rico's colonial reality cannot be overlooked. President Bush admitted that the people of Puerto Rico have never been consulted as equals on their political status...*

*Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church advocate for justice and freedom for the Puerto Rican political prisoners, Furthermore, that a letter from the General Conference Secretary be sent to the President of the United States asking him to grant pardon, because they have more than sufficiently served their sentence.*

In 1995, the Baptist Peace Fellowship said:

*In the spirit of reconciliation throughout the world we call*

*upon the President of the United States to exercise the constitutional power of pardon to grant immediate and unconditional release to the many Puerto Rican women and men in U.S. prisons for their actions in favor of self-determination and independence.*

Also in 1995, the Episcopal Church of Puerto Rico said:

*Whereas, political action and the struggle for self-determination of the peoples responds, in our national case, to an unresolved problem...*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the 88th Annual Diocesan Assembly of the Episcopal Church of Puerto Rico, the Sixteenth as an Autonomous Church,*

*Ask the Honorable William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States of North America, to grant unconditional and immediate amnesty to the Puerto Rican patriots imprisoned in the United States...*

In the January-February, 1995 issue of *The Witness*, an independent journal owned by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, Editor/publisher Jeanie Wylie-Kellerman wrote:

*In this issue, we raise the names of several political prisoners. We raise them as icons into the injustice and cruelty that are woven through our American way of life. We raise them as people willing to move past liberalism to activism with cost.*

---

## **THESE STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT**

HAVE INCREASED THE AWARENESS AMONG OUR CHURCHES THAT POLITICAL PRISONERS DO EXIST IN THE UNITED STATES. THEY HAVE BEGUN TO PROMPT QUESTIONS:

WHO ARE THESE PRISONERS?

WHY ARE THEY IN PRISON?

HOW CAN THEIR ACTIONS BE EXPLAINED?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE"?

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

THIS RESOURCE IS INTENDED TO ANSWER SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS.

---

---

## **Who are these prisoners?**

*Their names are Antonio Camacho Negrón, Edwin Cortés, Elizam Escobar, Ricardo Jiménez, Oscar López Rivera, Adolfo Matos, Dylcia Pagán, Alberto Rodríguez, Alicia Rodríguez, Lucy Rodríguez, Luis Rosa, Juan Segarra Palmer, Alejandrina Torres, Carlos Alberto Torres, and Carmen Valentín.*

Most are parents; some are grandparents. Prior to their incarceration, they were workers, professionals, teachers, community organizers, and activists. They labored in their communities for quality education, child care facilities, health services, and against drug abuse. In prison, they have done artwork, developed child care and AIDS awareness and prevention programs, and taught literacy, high school equivalency (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Church leaders who have met some of them in person have said:

*I found myself very moved... They are women of great character and are... in the midst of very difficult circumstances, holding fast to their own sense of who they are and who they want to be.*  
— Rev. Dr. Paul H. Sherry,  
President, United Church of Christ

*The personal impact that they had on me as Latina sisters is the personal integrity that they demonstrate, their spirit of dignity, and their gentleness about what they believe in.*  
— Ms. Linda Jaramillo, President,  
Council for Hispanic Ministries  
of the United Church of Christ

*You almost feel, after a visit like this, that you should speak in lower voice than you usually do.*

*These were three very gentle people whose vision, even after all these years of incarceration, is anything but dimmed, and that does something to anybody who makes a visit like this.*

— Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Dipko,  
Executive Vice-President,  
United Church Board  
for Homeland Ministries,  
United Church of Christ

*Meeting the women... was a profound honor. Their dedication, their serenity, their compassion, their commitment, and their humility — along with their inner and outer beauty — combine to make them exactly what they say they are not: role models.*

— Ms. Sammy Toineeta, Lakota;  
Associate for Racial Justice, National  
Council of the Churches of Christ

*My visit with Alejandrina Torres and the other political prisoners in September was my first such visit, and I was very, very impressed with what they had to say, with*



*Rev. Dr. Paul Sherry, Ida Luz Rodríguez, Dylcia Pagán, Linda Jaramillo, Carmen Valentín, and Rev. Dr. Thomas Dipko at the Federal Correctional Institution at Dublin, CA*

---

*their integrity, with their commitment, and with all the injustices their people have endured. I was moved by the strength they have maintained despite all the hardship and suffering they have endured, and by Alejandrina's strong religious convictions.*

— Rev. Helen Locklear, Associate, Racial Justice Leadership, Presbyterian Church

*Visiting Alejandrina was a most powerful experience — she is an incredible woman of faith. She sets a tremendous example of the willingness to confront oppression, going the road to Jerusalem, as Jesus did, regardless of the cost.*

— Rev. Annie González, Pastor, Northlake United Methodist Church, Northlake, IL

**The Macheteros.** Two of the fifteen (Antonio Camacho Negrón and Juan Segarra Palmer) were convicted of conspiracy and related charges as members of the Macheteros, a clandestine group based in Puerto Rico. The Macheteros took responsibility for a series of military actions, including bombings, the destruction of nine National Guard planes, attacks on military personnel based in Puerto Rico, and the taking of \$7.5 million of government-insured money. The charges against these two prisoners included taking the money and transporting it out of the U.S.

**The Armed Forces for National Liberation (FALN).** The other thirteen prisoners were convicted of seditious conspiracy and related charges as

members of the Armed Forces for National Liberation (FALN), a clandestine group based in the United States. The FALN took responsibility for a series of bombings of government, corporate, and military sites. The charges against these men and women included possession and transportation of firearms, armed robbery, and transportation of stolen vehicles. Invoking international law, they claimed prisoner of war status, refused to recognize the jurisdiction of state and U.S. courts, did not defend themselves, did not challenge the government evidence against them, and received particularly long sentences of 35 to 105 years.

#### **What is “seditious conspiracy”?**

Webster's Dictionary defines sedition as “a stirring up of rebellion against the government.” Seditious conspiracy is the charge for which Nelson Mandela was convicted and imprisoned in South Africa for so many years. In the U.S., it has been used primarily against Puerto Rican independentistas, proponents of Puerto Rican independence (from the 1930s to the 1980s, it was used exclusively against them), for conspiring to use force against the lawful authority of the United States of America over Puerto Rico. It does not reflect a distinct “crime,” but serves as an “umbrella” charge which ties together all other charges. Like the charge of conspiracy, it also enables the government to charge members of an organization for actions of everyone else in the organization, regardless of their actual involvement in the specific action. For example, Luis Rosa was about twelve years old

---

#### **WHY ARE THEY IN PRISON?**

THESE FIFTEEN MEN AND WOMEN WERE CONVICTED AS MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN ARMED ACTIONS AGAINST CORPORATE AND MILITARY TARGETS MAINTAINING THE ONGOING COLONIAL SITUATION OF PUERTO RICO. NONE OF THE FIFTEEN WAS EVER CHARGED WITH ANY ACTION RESULTING IN BLOODSHED.

---

when the first bombing occurred in the conspiracy with which he is charged.

### ***How can their actions be explained?***

A brief history

On November 19, 1493, Christopher Columbus landed on an island called Borinquén by its people, the Taínos. Most of the Taínos soon died from slavery, disease, and murder; the Spanish brought Africans to replace them as slaves. On November 25, 1897, Puerto Rico negotiated a Charter of Autonomy with Spain requiring the consultation of the Puerto Rican people before the island's status could be changed. On July 25, 1898, at the end of the Spanish American War, the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico. In the Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the U.S. as "war booty" without consulting the Puerto Rican people regarding their status, in violation of the Charter of Autonomy.

U.S. presence in Puerto Rico severely altered every aspect of Puerto Rican life. It shifted the economy, first from subsistence agriculture to sugar for export, and then to light industries, such as textiles and pharmaceuticals, resulting in significant environmental degradation. The government imposed U.S. citizenship, the teaching of U.S. history and the English language, outlawed the display of the Puerto Rican flag, persecuted independentistas as "subversives," and sterilized 40% of the women of child-bearing age.<sup>3</sup> And although Spanish has been the official language of instruction since 1948, English

3. Luis Nieves Falcón, "Puerto Rico: The Costs of Colonialism," in *Puerto Rico: The Cost of Colonialism*, Fellowship of Reconciliation Task Force on Latin America and the Caribbean, 1991.

remains the official language of the courts, and U.S. cultural influence continues through the official and popular media and through the presence of U.S. corporations on the island.

Today, the U.S. maintains numerous military installations, including 11 military bases, which cover 13% of the island. Throughout the history of Puerto Rico, there have been numerous incidents of violence against the people, including more recent times. On July 25, 1978 — the 80th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico — two independentistas, Carlos Soto Arrivi and Arnaldo Dario Rosado, were murdered by government agents. In 1982, then Governor Carlos Romero Barceló ordered the National Guard to bulldoze Villa Sin Miedo (Village Without Fear), a squatters' village on idle government lands. In 1985, over 300 FBI agents and members of the U.S. Special Forces armed with automatic weapons invaded the homes of dozens of student activists and trade unionists, without informing the Puerto Rican government. The island of Vieques, a fishing site, has been used for decades for bombing practice, destroying the livelihood of the people. Those who protested were imprisoned as "criminals." Today, new military radar facilities are being constructed, generating massive protests among the people. In short, the U.S. colonial relationship with Puerto Rico has affected every aspect of Puerto Rican life, and continues to be maintained by U.S. military occupation and corporate influence.



*Carmen Valentín with granddaughter Karina*



*Alejandrina Torres with husband, UCC Rev. José A. Torres*

---

***If we call for the release of these prisoners, aren't we supporting a particular political perspective? What political status do Puerto Ricans support?***

---

**INTERNATIONAL LAW**

MANY PEOPLE IN THE U.S., INCLUDING CHURCH MEMBERS, MAY BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS AFFIRMED THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO RESORT TO ARMS IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.<sup>4</sup> ON OCTOBER 12, 1970, THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (RESOLUTION 2621 (XXV)) AFFIRMED THAT:

COLONIALISM IN ALL ITS FORMS AND MANIFESTATIONS IS A CRIME WHICH CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE RESOLUTION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL NATIONS AND PEOPLES, AND ALSO VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW... AND RECOGNIZED THE INHERENT RIGHT OF COLONIAL PEOPLES TO STRUGGLE WITH ALL MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL AGAINST THE COLONIAL POWER WHICH SUPPRESSES THEIR ASPIRATIONS TO LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE.

---

Of course, independentistas are among those working most intensively to secure the release of these prisoners. But people of all political sectors in Puerto Rico have joined the call for their release in light of how much time they have already served, and in the recognition that the release of political prisoners must be part of any genuine resolution of conflict in a colonial situation.<sup>5</sup>

The UN affirmations were more fully spelled out in UN Resolution 3103, (see sidebar) adopted by the General Assembly on December 12, 1973, which

- ◆ outlawed attempts to suppress struggles against colonial and alien domination,
- ◆ recognized anti-colonial conflicts as international armed conflicts, and
- ◆ recognized prisoners captured in such conflicts as prisoners of war.

International law outlawing colonialism has been explicitly applied to the case of Puerto Rico by the United Nations' Decolonization Committee. Although the U.S. has consistently denied it, the United Nations and both the pro-independence and pro-statehood political sectors in Puerto Rico have

recognized that Puerto Rico is a colony of the U.S., lacking political, economic, or cultural self-determination. Like the American colonists, the Puerto Rican prisoners see themselves as part of an anti-colonial struggle, and place their actions — however the US may criminalize them — in the context of this international law. They argue that in the context of international law, the real crime is the US occupation of Puerto Rico, and not their actions to resist it.

In Puerto Rico today, the pro-commonwealth Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP) each usually win approximately 45% of the vote, and the pro-independence Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) wins approximately 5% of the vote. The relatively low electoral support for the independence position leads some people in the U.S. to discount the independence movement. Independence advocates point out, however, that support for independence has been seriously weakened by criminalization and persecution of the independence movement, such as in the exclusion of independentistas from public-sector jobs. They also say that the significance of such referenda is devalued by the US Congress' repeated statements that the results of votes concerning Puerto Rico's status are not binding. Such self-perpetuating effects of the colonial relationship have been recognized by the United Nations, which provides for the complete withdrawal of the colonial

---

4. The full text of these resolutions is provided in Appendix F.

5. See, for example, the open letter to President Clinton, signed by people from all political sectors, in Appendix C.

establishment, including the military apparatus, prior to a decision regarding political status.<sup>6</sup> In addition, it should be noted that many independentistas boycott elections and referenda because of the failure of such processes to meet international standards.

### **What do the Scriptures say?**

The Scriptures show that Jesus' battles were ideological and spiritual rather than military — but they did involve profound conflict with the colonial ruling powers. The arrest of John the Baptist propelled Jesus to begin his public ministry (Mk. 1:14), and Jesus' clearing of the temple (Mt. 21:12-17, Mk. 11:15-19, Lk. 19:45-58, Jn. 2:13-22) dramatically challenged the economic, political, and religious control of the authorities over the people. Like the political prisoners of our day, Jesus was clearly considered a threat by the state, charged with "perverting our nation" (Lk. 23:2) and "stirring up the people" (Lk. 23:5). He endured both "state" and "federal" trials, where he refused to defend himself (Mt. 27:1-2, 11-14; Mk. 15:1-5; Lk. 23:1-12; Jn. 18:28-38, although John's account differs somewhat from the others). By his silence, he may have been refusing to recognize the jurisdiction of the colonial courts over him — or he may have simply recognized the futility of a legal defense in courts run by the very forces whose authority he rejected. Like today's political prisoners, who are repeatedly strip searched, he was stripped and humiliated, and ultimately received the harshest possible sentence — the sort reserved for political dissidents.

6. UN Resolution 1514; see Appendix F.

Scholars have suggested that the two "bandits" crucified with him were militant revolutionaries, who, like him, were considered a threat to the state.

### **Jesus said to "Turn the other cheek." Shouldn't Christians insist on non-violence, too?**

Throughout history, Christians have, at times, felt compelled to break the law in pursuit of justice. In the U.S., Henry David Thoreau, the underground railroad, draft resisters, Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement, Dorothy Day, and the nuclear disarmament movement are all examples of inspiring non-violent courage and witness. But from the founding of the United States as a nation, people of conscience have, at times, also taken up arms in the quest for freedom. The American patriots, for example, were church members and used the churches to prepare for armed resistance against British colonialism. Other examples of armed resistance include slave rebellions and the indigenous resistance to the western expansion of the U.S.

In the same issue of *The Witness* quoted on page 2, Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project Director Rev. Michael Yasutake responds to the question of violence:

*The so-called radical movements that would resort to armed defense or resistance against forces of injustice are not any more violent than any nation that resorts to armed conflict for national security. International laws such as of the UN maintain*

### **SINCE THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE,**

CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND EXCEPT FOR THE PEACE CHURCHES, MOST CHURCHES CONTINUE TO APPROVE OF THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS IN THE MILITARY.

---

**IF THEY ACCEPTED THE RISK,  
SHOULDN'T THEY ACCEPT THE  
PUNISHMENT?**

THESE PRISONERS HAVE ALREADY ACCEPTED A GREAT DEAL OF PUNISHMENT. AND ALTHOUGH, UNDERSTANDABLY, THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE REUNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES, THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO HOLD TO THEIR PRINCIPLES. BUT THE PRISONERS' ACCEPTANCE OF THE RISKS DOES NOT EXCUSE CHRISTIANS AND OTHER PEOPLE OF CONSCIENCE FROM OUR DUTY TO CALL OUR GOVERNMENT INTO ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE FACE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND EXCESSIVELY AND PUNITIVELY LONG SENTENCES WHICH THEY HAVE SUFFERED. WE MUST CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENTAL AND JUDICIAL SYSTEMS WHICH PUNISH SUCH MEN AND WOMEN OF CONSCIENCE. OUR FAITH CALLS US INTO GOD'S REIGN, IN WHICH THE WEAK WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND THE ARROGANT BROUGHT DOWN, SO THAT ALL MAY DWELL IN JUSTICE AND UNITY.

---

*that the oppressed may use any means necessary for liberation, including the use of arms.*

*The prevalent view of the dominant society in the U.S. is that nonviolent methods are the only appropriate means of social change...[even though] many in the dominant society, including religious institutions, are not pacifists themselves — fully relying on armed police power for protection or on the... armed services in the name of national security.*

As Lourdes García, United Church Board for World Ministries staff person, wrote more bluntly in the Fellowship of Reconciliation's resource, Puerto Rico: the Cost of Colonialism:

*The oppressed have repeatedly been told by the church that salvation lies in their capacity to passively accept their fate and turn the other cheek... It is not difficult to imagine, therefore, why a call for nonviolence put forth by some North American Christians is hard to take. What challenges are North American Christians prepared to confront regarding the power structures of their society that operate in Puerto Rico?*

The international community has recognized that in the case of Puerto Rico, as in other situations of colonial conflict, the release of political prisoners is critical to the reconciliation process. Because as Christians we are called to be agents of justice and reconciliation, whether we are pacifists

or not, we are called to join the international community in its reconciling call for the release of these men and women.

***I thought the U.S. didn't have any political prisoners; aren't these prisoners just common criminals?***

When the international community — including the U.S. and President Clinton — has called for the release of “political prisoners” as part of a reconciliation process, it has clearly included people imprisoned for their participation in armed conflicts. In the case of Puerto Rico, however, the U.S. has resisted acknowledging that it has political prisoners by insisting that people who affirm the right to resort to arms are “criminals,” not “political prisoners.” But if we apply the same standards used in the cases of South Africa, Cuba, Northern Ireland, and the Middle East these Puerto Rican women and men would indeed be considered political prisoners.

Of course, many people will disagree with — or condemn outright — the activities for which these prisoners were convicted. But it should be noted that the actions for which they were imprisoned were motivated not (as with “common criminals”) for personal gain, but rather, for the sake of their nation. They accepted the risk of imprisonment or death because of their commitment to independence.

Further, the U.S. government has treated these cases more severely than those of common criminals. Government statistics show that common criminals receive far shorter

sentences than the Puerto Rican prisoners did. As mentioned above, their average sentence is 65.4 years — or about six times longer than the average murder sentence. And their sentences are far longer than those meted out to police convicted of anti-independence activity.

Former Puerto Rican police colonel Alejo Maldonado, an admitted assassin, is soon to be paroled after serving less time than the independentista prisoners, despite press reports that he took part in police death squads involved in kidnapping, robbery, extortion, weapons trafficking, torture, and murder. The five Puerto Rican police who were convicted of the 1978 Cerro Maravilla murders of two independentistas received sentences of 10-30 years — far shorter than Luis Rosa's sentence of 105 years — and the commander of the intelligence unit was released on parole after six years in prison.<sup>7</sup>

***If we call for the release of these prisoners, aren't we condoning violence?***

No. In calling for their release, we are not making a judgment about the use of arms. We are joining people from Puerto Rico, the U.S., and around the world, who are calling for the release of these prisoners in light of the 14 to 17 years most of them have already served, and in the recognition that the release of political prisoners must be part of any genuine resolution of conflict in a colonial situation.

***Shouldn't they have to show remorse before they are released?***

Although none of the Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners pardoned by President Carter in 1979 renounced the principle of the right to engage in armed struggle, in fact none ever engaged in it after their release.

Neither were expressions of remorse required of Nelson Mandela, Irish nationalists, nor Palestinians prior to their release. Rather, the United Nations regards the release of such prisoners as a part of the process of reconciliation and resolution of the conflicted or colonial situation.

***Specifically, what can I do to help?***

1. **Contact President Clinton** at the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20500, and urge him to grant amnesty to the Puerto Rican political prisoners. If possible, use your church or organization's letterhead, or write the letter by hand. Refer to your reasons as a Christian for supporting the release of the prisoners. If you are a Democrat, identify yourself as such. Invite friends, church members, and other contacts to join you in writing to the President.

2. **Sponsor a political prisoner.** You and/or your congregation may wish to sponsor a political prisoner. Sponsors write to and visit the prisoners, provide financial support, and seek to educate their congregation about the prisoner, political prisoners, and prison conditions.

***PROponents OF THEIR RELEASE***

INCLUDE THE BAPTIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP, AS NOTED ABOVE, AND MEMBERS OF OTHER PACIFIST ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION AND WAR RESISTERS' LEAGUE, AND PEOPLE FROM ALL POLITICAL SECTORS IN PUERTO RICO, INCLUDING THOSE WHO DO NOT SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE. PRIOR TO THE RELEASE OF THE PUERTO RICAN NATIONALISTS IN 1979, THE CHURCHES WERE AMONG THOSE WHO HELPED TO PRESS FOR THEIR RELEASE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR VIEWS OF THE NATIONALISTS' ACTIONS OVER TWENTY FIVE YEARS BEFORE.

7. Ortiz Luquis, "Ignacio Rivera: Un agente encubierto de abogado," *Claridad*, Nov. 29-Dec. 5, 1991, p. 3. For other articles concerning disproportionate sentencing, see: U.S. v. Moreno Morales *et al.*, 815F.2d 725 (1st Cir. 1987); Ortiz Luquis, "Carta ajena desmiente a Romero involucra al FBI," *Claridad*, Nov. 29-Dec. 5, 1991, p. 5; "Acuerdo esclarecería caso Muñoz Varela," *Claridad*, August 4-10, 1995, p. 3; Marilyn Pérez Cotto, "Justicia no puede descansar en testimonio Alejo," *Claridad*, Aug. 11-17, 1995, p. 3.

A. **Getting started.** Speak with others in your congregation about your interest and form a committee to work with you. Review the list of prisoners, their locations, and biographical sketches and identify the prisoner to whom you wish to relate. If you would like more information about a specific prisoner, or need other help getting started, contact Dr. S. Michael Yasutake, Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project, or one of the IPOC Board members listed on the inside back cover.

B. **Write to the prisoner,** and indicate that you want to correspond with him or her. Try to write at least once per month, and respond to her/his letters within a week, if you can. Invite him/her to share reflections, suggestions, needs, or a message for your congregation. Although the mail is monitored, most of it will be allowed.

C. **Hold a dedication service.** After you have had enough contact with the prisoner for you to be mutually satisfied about the sponsoring relationship, hold a ceremony celebrating this decision. If possible, invite members of other churches and one or more member of the prisoner's family to participate.

D. **Visit the prisoner.** Depending on your distance from the prisoner, it may not be possible for you to visit frequently. Try to visit at least once per year, and if you are within a half-day's drive, try to visit at least twice per year. Once you get to know him/her, you will probably want to visit more often than that!

Obtaining clearance for your first visit can be a challenge. Allow at least a month to obtain clearance at the federal prisons. See Appendix A for more detailed information about how to visit a political prisoner.

E. **Send money.** Commit yourself and your congregation to a specific amount – at least \$25/month if possible– to help with the prisoner's personal expenses. (These include money for phone calls, for which they must pay under the new phone system in many prisons; toiletries; photocopying; and postage.) To send money to a prisoner, you must send it to him or her in the form of a postal money order. (Be sure to include his/her register number on the money order.) Your congregation may also be able to help with the prisoner's family's travel expenses in coming to see her/him. Additional donations may be made to the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project.

F. **Educate your congregation.** Invite members of your congregation to pray and/or fast for the prisoner. Share with others in your congregation and your community about your experience with the prisoner you sponsor, his or her writings or art, and invite them to join you in a visit. Share your learnings about political prisoners or broader issues, such as about prison conditions or colonialism. Or ask a prisoner's family member or someone from IPOC to speak to your group.



Juan Segarra Palmer and Lucy Berrios  
Berrios

---

# **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A:  
HOW TO VISIT A POLITICAL PRISONER**

**APPENDIX B:  
PRISONER NAMES, BIRTHDAYS,  
ADDRESSES, STAFF NAMES,  
VISITING HOURS, AND DIRECTIONS**

**APPENDIX C:  
SAMPLE LETTERS TO PRESIDENT CLINTON**

**APPENDIX D:  
MAP OF PRISONER NAMES, PHOTOS, AND LOCATIONS**

**APPENDIX E:  
CHURCH RESOLUTIONS**

**APPENDIX F:  
UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS**

---

## APPENDIX A: HOW TO VISIT A POLITICAL PRISONER

In the name of your religious institution, contact the prison chaplain for permission to visit. For visiting federal prisons, check Appendix B for the name and phone number of the chaplain. Confirm the visiting days and times, since these are subject to change.

If you want help deciding whom to sponsor, write to IPOC or your denominational contact. We can provide you with the prisoners' biographical sketches and photos. Write to the prisoner and tell him/her the day and time you would like to visit. You may wish to describe your general physical appearance to help him/her identify you, but this is not strictly necessary.

Write to the chaplain on church letterhead and tell him/her whom you would like to visit, and when. Use your title, if you have one (e.g., "Rev." or "Dr."). Plan on several hours, or most of the day, for your visit. (Political prisoners are interesting people; you will be surprised how quickly the time passes, and will probably be frustrated if you do not allow enough time for the visit.) Start following up on your letter by calling the chaplain about a week after you mail it. (When you call the prison, if you are asked whether the call is in reference to an "inmate," say "no" and that you are a minister, and ask to speak with the chaplain.)

Expect to try repeatedly in order to reach the chaplain; they are often away from their desks. (Early morning

— around 8:00 a.m. local time — can sometimes be a good time to reach them.) If you have tried for two weeks and have not been able to reach them, call IPOC (847 328-1543) for support, and we will seek assistance from the central office of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Before your visit, you may wish to review the prisoner's biography and photograph, to help you recognize him/her and start off the conversation.

Dress conservatively. If you are ordained, you may wish to wear a clerical collar. This can help the prisoner identify you. Many men's prisons have strict regulations against clothing with lace cut-outs, tights, or anything considered "suggestive" or "revealing."

Before you leave the house, make sure you have:

- ◆ your driver's license or legally-recognized photo ID,
- ◆ your clergy card (if you have one),
- ◆ the prisoner's name and registration number,
- ◆ your car license plate # (you will need to put this on the visitor's form, so if you forget, you will have to go back to your car to check it),
- ◆ change (preferably quarters) for the vending machines. (The vending machines are how you and the prisoner will eat lunch and other snacks.) Prisons usually have a change machine for changing \$1 bills, but some prisons do not permit \$5

bills. Most prisons have a \$20 limit on cash. Many people find it convenient to put their change in a clear, zippered cosmetic case.

You may also take your Bible. You may be permitted a pen or pencil and writing paper, but if not, you may ask for these from the guard at the visitors' desk. Leave everything else (except your car keys) locked in your car.

Depart for the prison early to allow plenty of time to find the prison. Directions are available from IPOC or in Appendix B.

Arrive early — at least fifteen to thirty minutes before the start of the visiting times you were told — to allow for time to fill out the forms. Do not be surprised if you are kept waiting, or if the visiting times turn out to begin earlier or later than you were told.

You will have to go through a metal detector. You may have to remove your coat or jacket, shoes, and belt, but will not be asked to remove other clothing. You will not be able to take anything inside the prison to give to the prisoners. If you are permitted to take in papers or photos, you will not be able to give them to the prisoners; you will have to mail them in later.

Enjoy yourself! You will be visiting with a person of profound moral character and spiritual depth. Please be respectful of his or her spirituality, and do not try to force your religious perspective on him/her.

## APPENDIX B: PRISONER NAMES, BIRTHDAYS, ADDRESSES, STAFF NAMES, VISITING HOURS, AND DIRECTIONS

**Antonio Camacho Negrón**

#03587-069

Birthday: October 4

FCI Allenwood

White Deer, PA 17887

ph: 717 547-7950

Chaplains: Ron González, Tom Johnson

8:30 am - 3:30 Thursday - Monday

*To FCI Allenwood, PA*

The prison is on Rt. 15, about 5 miles north of I-80. Trip time: about 2 hours from Harrisburg.

**Elizam Escobar #88969-024**

Birthday: May 24

PO Box 1500, Unit 1

FCI El Reno

El Reno, OK 73036

phone: 405 262-4875

Chaplain: Keith Harrison

8:00 am - 3:00 pm Thursday - Monday

*To FCI El Reno, OK*

From Oklahoma City airport. Meridian Avenue to Interstate 40 West. Stay on 40W to El Reno exit (Not the El Reno exit at Diffee's Cars, but the next one, for Hensley's Restaurant and the community college.) Turn right at the end of ramp. Follow this road until it ends at a T intersection (at Old Rte 66) Go left. Prison is within 2 miles on left. Trip time: about 1/2 hour.

**Edwin Cortés #92153-024**

Birthday: March 27

**Ricardo Jiménez #88967-024**

Birthday: April 3

**Alberto Rodríguez #92150-024**

Birthday: April 14

USP Lewisburg

Lewisburg, PA 17837

ph: 717 523-1251

Chaplain: John Johnson

8:00 am - 3:00 pm seven days per week (religious visits are often denied on weekends and holidays)

*To USP Lewisburg, PA*

From New York, take I-80 to Exit 30A (Rt. 15). Take Rt. 15 south about 8 miles. The prison entrance road is on the west (right) side of Rt. 15. Trip time: about 3 hours from New York City or Philadelphia.

**Oscar López Rivera #87651-024**

Birthday: January 6

USP Marion

PO Box 1000

Marion, IL 62959

phone: 618 964-1441

Chaplain: Jim Rivett

8:00 am - 3:00 pm Thursday - Sunday

*To USP Marion*

From St. Louis, take I-64 one hour east to I-57 south one hour; from Chicago, take I-57 south 6 hours. Take exit 54B and head west on Old Main street about 1 mile to State Rte 148. Turn left (south) on Hwy. 148 and go about 6 miles. At Prison Road, (there is a Grange Hall on the left side of Rte. 148), turn left (east). Follow the driveway to the prison. Trip time: 2 hours from St. Louis, 6 hours from Chicago.

**Adolfo Matos Antongiorgi**

#88968-024, Unit J

Birthday: September 18

USP Lompoc

3901 Klein Blvd.

Lompoc, CA 93436

ph: 805 735-2771 (general number)

ph: 805 737-0581 (Chaplain)

Chaplain: Michael Cook

8:30 am - 3:00 pm Thursday - Monday

*To USP Lompoc, CA*

From Los Angeles/Santa Barbara, follow Rt. 101 west/north. Near Gaviota, take Rt. 1 to Lompoc. Continue west/north on Rt. 246. The prison is on Rt. 246. Trip time: about 3 1/2 hours from Los Angeles; 1 1/2 hours from Santa Barbara.

**Dylcia Pagán #88971-024**

Birthday: October 15

**Alicia Rodríguez #88972-024**

Birthday: October 21

**Lucy Rodríguez #88973-024**

Birthday: July 7

**Carmen Valentín #88974-024**

**Birthday: March 3**

FCI Dublin

5701 8th St., Camp Parks

Dublin, CA 94568

ph: 510 833-7500 (general number)

510 833-7524 (Religious Services)

Chaplains: Ron Richter, George Jackson

8:30 am - 3:00 pm Saturday, Sunday;

Thursday, Friday, 4:30-8:00

*To FCI Dublin, CA*

From San Francisco/Oakland, take I-580 East about 40 minutes to the Hopyard Rd. exit. (This is the second Dublin exit from the west.) At the exit, turn left (the road is called Dougherty Road to the left and Hopyard Road to the right) and cross over the highway. After the first intersection, get in the right lane and look for "Correctional Institution" sign on the right side of the street. Turn right and go through the gate into Camp Parks. Immediately, turn left. Follow the road to the end and turn right onto 8th Street. You will cross a couple of streets and pass a chapel on your left. Continue until you see the prison entrance on your left. Trip time: approximately 45 minutes from Oakland.

**Luis Rosa #88975-024**  
Birthday: August 6  
USP Leavenworth  
Box 1000  
Leavenworth, KS 66048  
ph: 913 682-8700  
Chaplain: Rev. Michael Crow  
Sunday through Saturday,  
8:00 am - 3:30 pm

*To USP Leavenworth, KS*  
From the airport, take I-29 North. Exit at Rt. 92. Follow 92 West and follow the sign directing you to turn left to Leavenworth. Cross the bridge over the river. In Leavenworth, you will be on Metropolitan. Pass Ft. Leavenworth on your right; the USP is right after Ft. Leavenworth, also on the right side of the road. Trip time: Approximately 30 minutes from the Kansas City airport.

**Juan Segarra-Palmer #15357-077**  
Birthday: March 6  
FCI Marianna  
PMB 7007  
Marianna, FL 32447-7007  
ph: 904 526-2313  
Chaplain: Ron Martin  
8:30 am - 3:30 pm Thursday - Monday

*To FCI Marianna, FL*  
From Tallahassee, take I-10 west to Marianna. Turn left at Rte 90. Turn right at the second red light (71 North). After about 6 miles, turn left on Caverns Road (at Texaco Station). About 1 mile down, turn right (at the train). Trip time: about 1 1/2 hours.

**Alejandrina Torres #92152-024**  
Birthday: June 18  
FCI Danbury  
Pembroke Station  
Danbury, CT 06811  
ph: 203 743-6471  
Chaplain: Anne Marie Raftery

8:30 am - 3:00 pm Saturday, Sunday,  
Monday;  
12:30 - 8:00 pm, Thursday, Friday

*To FCI Danbury, CT*  
From New York, take I-684 North to I-84 East. Take Danbury Exit 5 (Department of Motor Vehicles sign). Follow signs to the prison. You will pass a shopping center with a McDonald's. Follow the road about 2 more miles. The prison is at the top of a hill on the right side of the road. Trip time: about 1 1/2 hours from New York. From Boston/Hartford, take I-84 West and take Exit 6 into Danbury.

Technically, prisoners at FCI Danbury with odd fifth digit register numbers visit on odd calendar days, and prisoners with even fifth digit register numbers visit on even calendar days, but clergy may be able to have this restriction waived. Religious visits are often denied on weekends or holidays.

**Carlos Alberto Torres #88976-024**  
Birthday: September 19  
USP Oxford  
Oxford, WI 53952  
ph: 608 584-5511  
Chaplain: Father Kelly or Chapel Service  
Friday through Monday  
8:00 am - 3:00 pm

*To FCI Oxford, WI*  
From Chicago set tripmeter to 0, take I-90 for approximately 170 miles to Exit 108 B for Wausau. Follow 78N to 51N. Divided highway ends at about 187 miles. Exit 106 W82 Oxford, at approximately 192 miles and go left at end of ramp. Go through town of Oxford. Go right on County G at approximately 200 miles. Stay on G, go through town of Brooks. Prison road at mile 206, turn left. Pass the prison camp and continue on to the FCI. Trip time: about 3 1/2 hours.

# APPENDIX C: SAMPLE LETTERS TO PRESIDENT CLINTON

THE NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1994



## Open Letter to PRESIDENT CLINTON:



### Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners

As citizens engaged in business, industry, civic activities and as Puerto Rican leaders, we call upon you to release the fifteen (15) Puerto Rican men and women imprisoned in the United States for their activities seeking independence for Puerto Rico. They are serving disproportionately lengthy sentences, with no hope for parole, while social prisoners routinely serve a fraction of the more than fourteen (14) years most of these women and men have already served. Regardless of what we may think about the status of Puerto Rico or efforts to gain its independence, we urge you, in the best spirit of reconciliation and the search for peace which is prevailing in the world today as reflected in your initiatives towards enhanced understanding among the people of South Africa, Haiti, the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to exercise your constitutional power of pardon, as have so many presidents before you, to free these incarcerated Puerto Ricans.

#### From Puerto Rico:

Sen. Roberto Rexach Benitez, (New Progressive Party, PNP), President, Puerto Rican Senate  
Rep. Zaida Hernández Torres, (New Progressive Party, PNP), Speaker of Puerto Rico's House of Representatives  
Sen. Miguel Hernández Agosto, Popular Democratic Party (PPD), Senate Minority leader, Puerto Rican Senate  
Sen. Ruben Berrios, Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP)  
Rep. David Noriega, Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP)  
Gov. Rafael Hernández Colon, ex-governor, Popular Democratic Party (PPD)  
Gov. Roberto Sánchez Vilella, ex-governor, Popular Democratic Party (PPD)

#### Puerto Rican Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) and its Executive Committee:

Valentín Hernández, President  
José M. Torres, Secretary-Treasurer  
José E. Cádiz, 1st Vice-President  
Carmen Fanny Valdes, Vice-President  
José Feliciano, Vice-President  
Carlos Ortiz, Vice-President

#### Puerto Rican Manufacturers Association

#### Puerto Rican Bar Association and Present and Past Presidents:

Harry Anduze Montano 1994-96  
Carlos Noriega 1992-94  
José M. Sagardia Perez 1990-92  
Hector Lugo Bougal 1986-88  
Luis F. Camacho 1980-82  
Angel Tapia Flores 1978-80  
Graciany Miranda-Marchand 1976-78  
Francisco Aponte Perez 1970-72

Rodolfo Cruz Contreras 1968-70  
Noel Colón Martínez 1964-66

#### From New York:

Congressman José E. Serrano (D-NY)  
Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY)  
Sen. Efraín González, New York State Senator  
Councilman José Rivera  
Councilman Adam Clayton Powell  
Roberto Rami, Bronx Democratic Party Chairman  
Fernando Fuentes, Councilman, 2nd District, Yonkers  
Willie Colon

#### From Chicago:

Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL)  
Alderman Billy Ocasio

#### From Philadelphia:

Councilman at Large Angel L. Ortiz



---

## Puerto Rican Bishops' Conference

April 24th, 1996

Honorable Bill Clinton  
President of the United States  
White House  
Washington, DC

Dear President Clinton:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

We write to urge you to grant the pending application for the immediate and unconditional release of the fifteen Puerto Rican women and men in prison for their pro-independence activities.

This expression of support comes as a result of exploring not only the theological aspect, but the historical and human rights aspects, and included a pastoral visit, conducted at the behest of one of our bishops, with one of these prisoners. This visit, along with our reflections, has led to our discernment that both justice and mercy place upon us a moral claim.

The Scriptures commit us to hear the cry for justice and mercy for our imprisoned brothers and sisters, and to preach release for the oppressed.

We therefore stand among the many other denominations, civic and religious groups, elected officials, and community leaders ready and willing to embrace these fifteen men and women in the spirit of reconciliation.

May the God of justice and compassion guide you in making this significant moral decision.

Respectfully,

S.E.R. Luis Cardenal Aponte Martínez, Archbishop of San Juan  
Mons. Iñaki Mallona, C.P. Bishop of Arecibo, President  
Mons. Ulises Casiano, Bishop of Mayagüez, Vice President  
Mons. Fremiot Torres Oliver, Bishop of Ponce  
Mons. Enrique Hernández, Bishop of Caguas  
Mons. Ricardo Suriñach, Auxiliary Bishop of Ponce  
Mons. Héctor Rivera, Auxiliary Bishop of San Juan  
Mons. Hermín Negrón Santana, Auxiliary Bishop of San Juan, Secretary

---

September 20, 1996

President William Clinton  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I write to urge you to grant amnesty to the fifteen Puerto Rican prisoners, twelve of whom I have had the privilege of visiting personally.

When I began in my present position five years ago, I had very little familiarity with the political prisoners issue. Since Alejandrina Torres is a member of the UCC, I had heard about her and her sufferings in Chicago and Lexington. But I knew none of the prisoners personally, and had never set foot inside a prison or jail. (I admit this with some embarrassment, given Jesus' clear teaching about visiting prisoners.) Since the job description explicitly called for work in this area, I felt that it was important for me to visit at least some of these prisoners before I could competently assist others to develop ministries with them. I decided to try to arrange a visit with Alejandrina and the other Puerto Rican prisoners (Dylcia Pagán, Ida Luz Rodríguez, and Carmen Valentín) at FCI Dublin while visiting the Bay Area on other business.

Despite six years as a parish minister, I wasn't sure what to expect from a visit with a group of "terrorists." But my visit with them was completely different from any pastoral visit I had ever conducted. I had never before encountered people of such impressive quality. Their intellectual acumen, their currency with political events, their deep compassion and love for people, their courage in the face of all they had suffered were simply awe-inspiring, certainly surpassing anything I had encountered in the classroom or professional life. Although I had allotted the whole day for visiting them, I had worried about how we would fill the time; instead, the hours flew by and I found myself at the end of the day wishing that I could stay longer. That experience was subsequently replicated in my visits with Edwin Cortés, Ricardo Jiménez, Adolfo Matos, Alberto Rodríguez, Alicia Rodríguez, Oscar López Rivera, Antonio Camacho Negrón, and Luis Rosa — except that I no longer worried, of course, that we would be able to fill the time. In every case, although their particular pride in being Puerto Rican and love of their people was very evident, so was their understanding of and kinship with people of other racial and national groups. Although I am obviously not Puerto Rican, I experienced a strong bond of mutual respect and understanding with each of them.

It is difficult to convey to someone who has never met them what about them makes visiting them such a tremendous privilege. But all those who have, have come away profoundly moved and convinced that these incredibly gifted women and men simply do not belong behind bars. For me as a Christian, they have tremendously deepened my understanding of the spiritual life and the willingness to sacrifice for one's beliefs.

Although I can personally attest only to the character of twelve of the fifteen prisoners for whom amnesty is being requested, I hope that this will be construed in no way which will undermine the petition of the other three, whom I have not yet had the privilege of meeting. Personally and on behalf of the United Church of Christ, I urge you to recommend the release of all fifteen of these remarkable men and women. May the God of justice and compassion guide you in this critical moral decision.

In hope,

Rev. Dr. C. Nozomi Ikuta  
United Church Board for Homeland Ministries

## INTERNATIONAL CALL TO CONSCIENCE

### To U.S. President William Clinton & U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno On the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners

We join our voices with those of other people of conscience by asking for unconditional amnesty for the Puerto Rican political prisoners confined in prisons and jails within the United States. Before their incarceration, these men and women were individuals who functioned as vital members of their community. Comprised of students, artists, lawyers, secretaries, scholars, journalists, community activists, trades people and teachers, many are also mothers and fathers who have spent over a decade in prison while their children have grown up without them.

These men and women have been imprisoned, and many given virtual life sentences, for their activities on behalf of the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico. In reaffirming the Puerto Rican people's right to self-determination, the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization has passed resolutions every year since 1972 on the vital necessity for the decolonization of Puerto Rico.

The conditions of their confinement have violated generally accepted human rights standards. For example, in disregard of explicit federal regulations mandating that prisoners be placed in prisons as close to their families as possible, these prisoners have been imprisoned unnecessarily far from their homes. Their disproportionately large sentences, when compared to social prisoners sentenced during the same time frame, indicate the political nature of their incarceration.

Given the above considerations, we ask that you grant all of them unconditional amnesty.

**Adolfo Pérez Esquivel**

founder, Servicio Paz Y Justicia, Argentina;  
recipient, 1974 Nobel Peace Prize

**Rigoberta Menchú Tum**

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador;  
recipient, 1992 Nobel Peace Prize

**Tandi Luthuli Gcabashe**

SA Director, American Friends Service  
Committee \* (recipient, 1947 Nobel Peace Prize);  
daughter of South African Chief Albert Luthuli  
(recipient, 1960 Nobel Peace Prize)

**José Ramos-Horta**

Special Rep. of the Maubere (East Timor);  
recipient, 1996 Nobel Peace Prize

**Rev. Monsignor Bruce Kent**

past president, Bureau International Permanent  
de la Paix/International Peace Bureau \*  
(recipient, 1910 Nobel Peace Prize)

**Dr. Victor W. Sidel**

Co-President, International Physicians  
for the Prevention of Nuclear War \*  
(recipient, 1985 Nobel Peace Prize)

**Mrs. Coretta Scott King**

Director, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Center  
for Nonviolent Social Change;  
widow of Martin Luther King  
(recipient, 1964 Nobel Peace Prize)

**The Most Reverend Desmond Mpilo Tutu**

Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa;  
recipient, 1984 Nobel Peace Prize

**Dr. George Wald**

recipient, 1967 Nobel Prize in Medicine

**Mairead Corrigan Maguire**

Community of Peace People, N. Ireland;  
recipient, 1976 Nobel Peace Prize

**William C. Wardlaw**

Executive Director's Leadership Council, Amnesty  
International \*  
(recipient, 1977 Nobel Peace Prize)

**Dr. Elise Boulding**, former Secretary General, International Peace Research Association; **Doreen Boyd**, Deputy General Secretary, Young Women's Christian Association; **Etienne De Jonghe**, International Secretary, Pax Christi International; **Bishop Federico Pagura**, President, Consejo Internacional de Iglesias; **Wendy Singh**, Vice President, Penal Reform International; **Dr. Aaron Tolen**, President, World Council of Churches.

\*organizations listed for identification purposes

sponsored by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries for the United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115, 216 736-3280  
International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, 8 Rodríguez Serra 2B, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00907, 809/723.9829

## DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON:

As religious leaders, we write to urge you to **grant amnesty for the fifteen Puerto Rican** men and women incarcerated in the United States because of their actions on behalf of the cause of Puerto Rican independence. We affirm your commitment to human rights in the international context and your role in the reconciliation process in conflicted areas such as Northern Ireland and the Middle East, which has led to the release of political prisoners there. We pray for the release of our own political prisoners in the US, so that as a nation, we might practice at home what we preach abroad.

As people of faith, we are not united about the status of Puerto Rico, nor about the means employed by these fifteen women and men in their quest for an independent Puerto Rico. Given the long years in prison these men and women have already served, however—years longer than time served by persons convicted of murder—we are united in our compassion and our commitment to their release.

Prior to their incarceration, these women and men were teachers and students, community organizers, professionals, and activists. In prison they have done artwork, developed child care and AIDS awareness and prevention programs, and taught literacy, high school equivalency, and English as a Second language classes.

Now we join in appealing to you, as a person of faith and compassion, to allow these prisoners to return to the families and communities that await them. In such an act, we would surely see a sign of God's mercy and grace.

The Rt. Rev. David A. Alvarez  
Bishop, Episcopal Church of  
Puerto Rico, Saint Just

The Rev. Harry del Valle  
Synod Executive, Presbyterian Synod  
of Boriquén Puerto Rico, Mayagüez

Ms. Annie Milner  
African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Atlanta

Dr. Luther Smith  
Candler School of Theology  
Atlanta

The Rt. Rev. Craig B. Anderson  
President and Dean, General  
Theological Seminary, New York City

Ms. Marie Dennis  
Maryknoll Peace & Justice Office  
Washington, DC

The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Newhall  
General Secretary, International  
Council of Community Churches  
Mokena, Illinois

Dr. Betty V. Stith  
Secretary, Women's Home and  
Overseas Missionary Society  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion  
Church, New Rochelle, New York

The Rev. Yamina Apolinars  
Executive Minister, Baptist Church of  
Puerto Rico, Hato Rey

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Dipko  
Executive Vice President, United  
Church Board for Homeland Ministries  
United Church of Christ, Cleveland

The Rt. Rev. James H. Ottley  
Anglican Observer to the United  
Nations, New York City

The Most Rev. Walter Sullivan  
Catholic Diocese of Richmond,  
Virginia

Bishop Richard O. Bass, Sr.  
Ecumenical Officer  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
Birmingham

Bishop William Boyd Grove  
Ecumenical Officer, United Methodist  
Church, Albany

The Rev. Tyrone Pitts  
General Secretary  
Progressive National Baptist  
Convention, Inc., Washington, DC

Bishop Melvin G. Talbert  
California-Nevada Conference  
The United Methodist Church  
West Sacramento

Bishop Victor Bonilla  
Methodist Church of Puerto Rico  
Hato Rey

The Most Rev. Thomas J. Gumbleton  
Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit

Sister Nilda Resto Gómez  
Coordinator, Community of  
Jesus Christ the Mediator  
Bayamón, Puerto Rico

The Rev. Dr. Daniel E. Weiss  
General Secretary, American Baptist  
Churches USA, Valley Forge

The Rt. Rev. Edmond L. Browning  
Presiding Bishop, Episcopal Church  
New York City

The Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm  
General Minister and President  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Indianapolis

The Rev. Moises Rosa Ramos  
Executive Secretary  
Evangelical Council of Churches  
Río Piedras, Puerto Rico

Dr. Donnell Williams  
African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Northport, Alabama

The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell  
General Secretary  
The National Council of the Churches  
of Christ, New York City

The Most Rev. Enrique Hernández  
Catholic Diocese of Caguas  
Puerto Rico

The Rev. Dr. Paul H. Sherry  
President, United Church of Christ  
Cleveland

Mr. Addison Young  
African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Atlanta

Bishop Clarence Carr  
Presiding Bishop, Western Episcopal  
District, African Methodist Episcopal  
Zion Church, Greendale, Missouri

Bishop Charlene Kammerer  
Western North Carolina Conference  
United Methodist Church, Charlotte

Ms. Nancy Small  
National Coordinator, Pax Christi USA  
Erie

Bishop McKinley Young  
Ecumenical Officer and President  
Council of Bishops  
African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Atlanta

The Rev. Luis F. del Pilar  
General Pastor, Disciples of Christ  
of Puerto Rico, Bayamón

The Rev. Osvaldo Malavé Rivera  
Conference Minister, United Church of  
Christ of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras

# APPENDIX D: PRISONER NAMES, PICTURES, AND LOCATIONS (as of December 1997)



Dylcia Pagán  
63 years

Dublin,  
CA



Ida Luz  
Rodríguez  
83 years



Alicia Rodríguez  
85 years



Carmen Valentín  
98 years



Adolfo Matos  
78 years  
Lompoc, CA



Luis Rosa  
105 years  
Leavenworth, KS



Elizam Escobar  
68 years  
El Reno, OK

Carlos Alberto Torres  
78 years  
Oxford, WI



Oscar López Rivera  
70 years  
Marion, IL

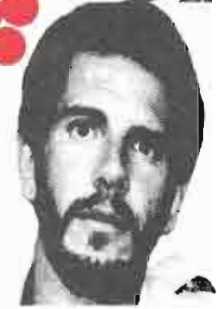
photo by Antonio Pérez,  
El Mundo newspaper



Edwin Cortés  
35 years  
Lewisburg, PA



Antonio Camacho Negrón  
15 years  
White Deer, PA



Ricardo  
Jiménez  
98 years  
Lewisburg, PA



Alejandrina  
Torres  
35 years  
Danbury, CT



Alberto Rodríguez  
35 years  
Lewisburg, PA



Juan Segarra Palmer  
55 years  
Marianna, FL

## APPENDIX E: CHURCH RESOLUTIONS

### GRAND JURY ABUSE

77-GS-77 VOTED: the Eleventh General Synod adopts the resolution "Grand Jury Abuse" as amended.

WHEREAS, The following resolution was forwarded to the 11th General Synod by action of the Illinois Conference, which arose out of concern for the Puerto Rican community in Chicago where the Federal Bureau of Investigation is harassing and illegally threatening with subpoenas the Rev. Jose Torres, pastor of the First Congregational UCC, his wife and members of that congregation; and

WHEREAS, The Resolution (adopted by the National Council of Churches [NCC] Governing Board) which has been revised by insertion of "Federal" before "Grand Jury" wherever "Grand Jury" appears.

RESOLVED, That the 11th General Synod of the United Church of Christ

1. Endorses the "Resolution on Grand Jury Abuse" adopted by the NCC Governing Board on May 5, 1977, as revised above.

2. Directs the President of the United Church of Christ to express this concern to:

- ◆ the President of the United States
- ◆ the Attorney General of the United States
- ◆ the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- ◆ the United States Attorney of the Southern District of New York, and

- ◆ the United States Attorney of the Northern District of Chicago.

3. Calls upon the appropriate national church agencies to pursue this issue, to prepare educational resources and to provide support to those subpoenaed before Federal Grand Juries who, for justifiable reasons of principle, refuse to testify and risk jail rather than expose others to harassment. (Specific examples of persons imprisoned presently on the basis (3 above) are Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemiken, staff of the Hispanic Commission of the Episcopal Church.)

### GRAND JURY ABUSE

Adopted by the NCC Governing Board, May 5, 1977

The Federal Grand Jury is envisioned in American law as a protector of citizens from unwarranted prosecutions. It is for this reason that its proceedings are secret and it has compulsory process of summoning witnesses.

However, in recent years there is evidence to indicate that its great powers have sometimes been misused to harass and intimidate political dissidents, including the anti-war movement, the activist student movement, the Native American movement, the Black movement, the trade-union movement, the Roman Catholic peace movement, the feminist movement, and now seem to be aimed at the Chicano and Puerto Rican movements as well.

Since the October 1976 meeting of the Governing Board of the NCC, several

persons connected with the Hispanic ministries of the churches have been subpoenaed to testify before federal grand juries ostensibly inquiring into terrorist bombings, and some have gone to prison rather than divulge the names of persons they felt had been working with the church in good faith, lest they in turn be subjected to investigation.

Congress has never given the Federal Bureau of Investigation subpoena powers, yet agents today routinely threaten uncooperative persons with subpoenas from a federal grand jury, and often indeed serve such subpoenas upon them.

It is the Governing Board's firm conviction that the use of the federal grand jury's powers as an instrument of investigation in support of law enforcement rather than as an evaluator of evidence already gathered is a distortion of its quasi-judicial function. The use of the federal grand jury's powers to harass and pursue political dissidents is a departure from its proper constitutional function, and is a great threat to public order, lawful government, and true domestic security.

Therefore, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches, in its continuing concern for human rights, including due process of law, freedom of association, the privilege against self-incrimination, the presumption of innocence and the free exercise of religion, adopts as its own procedure and urges upon the churches and ecumenical agencies the following course of action:

1. That churches and ecumenical agencies support legislation designed to enhance the rights of due process of law, freedom of association, effective legal counsel, the presumption of innocence and the privilege against self-incrimination<sup>1\*</sup> of persons subpoenaed to testify before federal grand juries. As well as the problem of federal grand jury abuse, there are attempts by other Government agencies to intervene in the internal affairs of the churches. A full policy statement based on careful consideration of the legal ramifications needs to be developed. The Governing Board therefore also urges:

2. That each member denomination of the NCC designate one person to keep in touch with the developments in this area and to represent it in developing a full policy statement on the subject of governmental intervention in the internal affairs of churches for presentation to a later session of the Governing Board.

In the meantime, church agencies, members and employees may well find themselves in the position of responding to inquiries by Government agencies. Until the adoption of a full policy statement, the Governing Board of the NCC adopts as its own procedure and urges adoption of the same by the member communions:

3. That, if and when any employee of a church or church agency is approached by government investigators (on matters related to that church or agency), the inquiry be handled by the senior officer available (with appropriate legal advice);

4. That the investigators be asked to state specifically in writing what information they want, their authority for seeking it, and whether it can be or has been obtained in any other way;

5. That the church or agency make contact with specialists in the ecumenical community, such as the Committee on Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches, and seek advice of legal counsel familiar with church-state law to determine what information, if any, can properly be given in response to the inquiry.

6. That churches and ecumenical agencies not divulge names of contributors, members, constituents, or any persons or groups with whom they have been working in a relationship of confidence and trust;

7. That churches and ecumenical agencies not divulge without benefit of legal counsel and consent of persons concerned personnel files, correspondence or other confidential and/or internal documents or information;

8. That churches and ecumenical agencies not divulge without benefit of legal counsel and consent of persons concerned travel or expense records;

9. That the churches and ecumenical agencies inform any persons in their employment or membership about whom inquiries have been made that such investigations are in process;

10. That churches and ecumenical agencies give moral and material support (including continuing salary to employees) for those members and

employees who for reasons of principle refuse to testify before a federal grand jury and risk jail rather than expose others to harassment — even if some consider their refusal unwise or unnecessary;

11. That churches and ecumenical agencies make particular provision to insure and protect the freedom of association and exercise of advocacy by members and staff in their ministries and relationships with social action agencies and oppressed and alienated groups.

12. In addition the denominations are urged to develop internal policies appropriate to their own polity and ecclesiology which will clarify their understanding of the meaning of confidentiality of communications within the fellowship and in the ministry of the church, so as to safeguard the relationship of confidence and trust that is essential to the existence and functioning of the church.

13. Churches which adopt the above recommendations should be aware that they, or their members, may be faced with the risk of civil penalties, including citations for contempt of court, in their effort to establish judicial recognition of the churches' right not to breach the relationship of confidence and trust which is essential to the functioning of the religious community.

---

<sup>1\*</sup>Though this is supposedly afforded by the grant of "use" immunity, the fuller "transactional" immunity that was formerly granted more adequately guards the privileges.

**THE RELEASE OF FOUR  
PUERTO RICAN  
NATIONALIST PRISONERS**

79-GS-87 VOTED: the Twelfth General Synod adopts the resolution on "The Release of Four Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners."

WHEREAS, more than twenty-five years ago, a group of Puerto Rican Nationalists, among them Oscar Collazo, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores, and Lolita Lebron concerned with the political independence of Puerto Rico attacked the Blair House mansion of the President of the United States, and others attacked various Congressmen on Capitol Hill, and as a result they were convicted and imprisoned; and,

WHEREAS, the Puerto Rican people have never favored the use of arms for political causes, yet they believe strongly that these jail terms have inflicted enough physical, spiritual and emotional punishment; and,

WHEREAS, the Puerto Rican Council of Protestant Churches, high bodies of the Episcopal, Methodist and Catholic Churches in Puerto Rico as well as in the United States, the National Council of Churches, former governors of Puerto Rico, both Houses of the Puerto Rican legislature, labor unions, professional organizations, student councils, cultural groups, political organizations and ten U.S. Congressmen, have written to the United States government expressing this concern; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Justice in December, 1978, presented

its recommendations to President Carter, who has to this present time taken no action on this petition for the release of these nationalists; and,

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ affirms human rights; and,

WHEREAS, the acts of mercy, love and reconciliation are part of any doctrine of human rights and President Carter is championing human rights in the world as part of the Christian heritage of this country; and,

WHEREAS, the grace of God is dispensed freely to us and an act of Presidential pardon would be a human response of love and demonstration of the spirit of reconciliation exercised by this nation upon former foreign foes while the nationalists are not part of the United States nation; and,

WHEREAS, that act will be an act of good will to Puerto Rico and as such a bridge of love in Latin America; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod directs the President of the United Church of Christ to petition personally President Carter to grant freedom to the four Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod requests the Office of Church in Society and the Commission for Racial Justice to pursue this issue, recognizing the United Church of Christ's concern for the human rights of all prisoners and to encourage awareness of this concern.

**DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT  
OF PRISONERS OF  
CONSCIENCE**

85-GS-71 VOTED: The Fifteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "The Discriminatory Treatment of Prisoners of Conscience."

**THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

The New Testament Scriptures inform us that Christ had a concern and an interest for those who were in captivity and imprisoned. This concern is reflected in the beginning of His public ministry where in Luke 4:16-20 He says that He is the One who has come to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and release to the captive and freedom to the oppressed.

Hebrews 13:3 reminds us to "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body."

Jesus clearly manifested in Matthew 25:31-40 his personal concern for incarcerated people and emphasized that the relationship with those in need is part of our Christian responsibility. "When did we see you, Lord?...When I was in prison you came to me. If you do it to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you have done it unto me."

The Scriptures commit us to bring to your attention the cry for justice and mercy for prisoners who are subjected to discriminatory treatment from the prison officials. Because we are called by Christ to bring the good news to the

captives and to preach release to the oppressed, we have a responsibility to improve the prison conditions of prisoners.

WHEREAS, participants of the UCC National Meeting of Women in July 1984 were moved by an urgent concern for the plight of incarcerated women, particularly of Alejandrina Torres in the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago, and sent to Norman Carlson, Director of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, 500 letters of protest which condemned such inhuman treatment; and,

WHEREAS, the President of the UCC appointed an Investigative Team which included representation from the CCW, the Executive Council, and other national bodies to look into the conditions of the imprisonment of Alejandrina Torres; and,

WHEREAS, continued investigation by Church representatives has revealed treatment which violates the civil and human rights of prisoners who conscientiously object to a particular position of their governments;

WHEREAS, women who are prisoners of conscience have been subjected to particular physical and mental cruelties not practiced with other inmates such as restricted visiting and correspondence privileges, frequent prison transfers, sexual harassment, sensory deprivation and other forms of isolation, physical assaults, denial of clergy visits, delayed medical treatment, and other discriminatory practices; and,

WHEREAS, constitutional rights afforded to pre-trial detainees have been violated; and,

WHEREAS, the press, television, and radio have not covered the unjust prison treatment these persons receive; and,

WHEREAS, all of the above findings have been confirmed by the First Congregational Church of Chicago, staff of the Chicago Metropolitan Association of the UCC, and the Civic-Religious Committee (ecumenical).

THEREFORE, the Fifteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ through the instrumentalities and national bodies:

1. Develops a national network of pastoral care to ensure the humane treatment of prisoners of conscience such as Alejandrina Torres, María Torres, Ida Luz Rodríguez, Dylcia Pagán, Carmen Valentín, María Cueto, and others.
2. Works to improve the treatment of prisoners through changes in the policies and procedures of the Justice Department, the Bureau of Prisons, the Congress, and other appropriate agencies.
3. Identifies and promotes educational programs on the plight of prisoners in cooperation with UCC conferences, associations, and local churches.
4. Incorporates this concern into UCC and ecumenical advocacy networks.

## MINISTRY TO PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

89-GS-89 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience."

### BACKGROUND

Scripture informs us that our Creator has a concern and an interest for those who are afflicted and in captivity. This concern reflected in Isaiah 58:6-9 focuses our attention on the care of others and commits us to action and faithful witness as God's people: "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free...to share bread...to bring in the homeless poor...to cover the naked."

Hebrews 13:3 calls us to "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body." Scripture in so stating clarifies that this is not a mere mechanical act but one of true empathy for others.

In John 10:9-10 we are informed that abundant life is only possible when Christ is made known to us, in our lives. "I am the door...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Jesus teaches us that he is continually revealing himself in human history and making himself known to us through our brothers and sisters who need our care. "When did we see you, Lord?...When I was in prison you came to see me. If you do it to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you have done it to me."

As Jesus clearly manifests his personal concern for the incarcerated people, he being himself a prisoner, and teaches us that the relationship with those in prison is part of our Christian responsibility; the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience, in an attempt to respond faithfully to Christ's call, brings to your attention the cry for justice and mercy for prisoners who are subjected to discriminatory treatment from prison officials and our responsibility to improve the prison conditions of prisoners.

#### TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, a Prisoner of Conscience is a person imprisoned - awaiting trial, serving a sentence, or incarcerated without a trial (such as on grand jury contempt charges) - for reasons of acts, associations or beliefs based on a fundamental concern for social justice and human rights (some of these concerns for self-determination of oppressed peoples and nations are considered by authorities as in opposition to prevailing United States foreign, domestic and military policies); well over 100 prisoners of conscience have been identified by The Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience and other human rights organizations;

WHEREAS, the 15th General Synod committed itself to creating a Ministry of Prisoners of Conscience which would monitor the treatment of prisoners within the U.S. prison system, provide pastoral care and advocate on their behalf;

WHEREAS, the General Synod found it important that educational materials

be developed on the plight of these prisoners and that public lobbying be carried out for the effecting of changes in present prison policies which perpetuate injustices to prisoners; the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience has joined the efforts of the United Nations Human Rights Campaign which will study the case of each prisoner of conscience and contact with Amnesty International has been made;

WHEREAS, the inclusive nature of the United Church of Christ required that this ministry be a shared ecumenical network of pastoral care, many denominations (Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal and Disciples of Christ) have adopted similar resolutions and have joined us in this ministry;

WHEREAS, United Church of Christ Instrumentalities (UCBHM, OCIS, CRJ, CCW), Conferences and the Chicago Metropolitan Association have shared in the commitment of making this ministry a reality through their time and financial support, the ministry today has created such a network of pastoral care, monitoring and advocacy which counts with national volunteers who visit prisoners representative of various social movements; a director; a central office in Evanston, Ill.; and an ecumenical board composed of the Midwest Regional National Council of Churches Racial Justice Working Group representatives, Illinois Conference staff, attorneys as well as lay and community persons;

WHEREAS, behavior modification units also known as control units, have been constructed (such as those in

Marion, Illinois and Marianna, Florida) to carry out both physical and psychological torture of prisoners, in order that they may be made broken people and ineffective in their lives of struggle for justice, for example, Alejandrina Torres (now in San Diego, CA prison), confined in various prisons since 1984 and charged with seditious conspiracy because she and her husband, United Church of Christ Pastor Jose Torres, have been active in the Puerto Rican independence movement, during which time this mother of five and grandmother has been sexually assaulted by male guards and abused in many other ways, and,

WHEREAS, the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience needs the help of the United Church of Christ in order to further implement the work of this ministry to prisoners.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Affirms the efforts of this new ministry;

Encourages local congregations through Conferences and Associations to reach out to prisoners of conscience in local area prisons, to their families, and volunteers as they effect visits;

Requests that the appropriate division of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice in cooperation with the National Council of Churches Racial Justice Working Group and the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience actively develop and disseminate information on the plight of Prisoners of Conscience which can

fight discrimination towards these prisoners;

Calls upon the United Church of Christ Office for Church in Society in cooperation with the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience and United Church of Christ United Nations observers to actively participate in the lobbying efforts of the United Nations Human Rights Campaign which through its attention to prisoners of conscience can bring about change in their present discriminatory treatment, and

Calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to coordinate the efforts of the Commission for Racial Justice, Coordinating Center for Women, Office for Church in Society and the appropriate divisions of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries as advocates for this ministry to prisoners of conscience and to report annually to the Executive Council on the progress and needs of this ministry. This is to be financed through existing available resources in the budgets of the above named instrumentalities.

**SELF DETERMINATION OF PUERTO RICO AND AMNESTY FOR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE**

91-GS-85 VOTED: the Eighteenth General Synod adopts the resolution "Self Determination of Puerto Rican and Amnesty for Prisoners of Conscience."

**THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

The Scriptures inform us that Christ had a concern and an interest for those who were in captivity and imprisoned. This concern is reflected in the beginning of His public ministry where in Luke 4:16-20 He says that He is the One who has come to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and release to the captive and freedom to the oppressed.

The Scriptures commit us to bring to your attention the cry for justice and mercy from our Puerto Rican prisoners who are subjected to discriminatory treatment from the prison officials.

Because we are called by Christ to bring the good news to the captives and to preach release to the oppressed, we have a responsibility to improve the prison conditions of the Puerto Rican prisoners and to eliminate the colonial condition of the Puerto Rican people.

WHEREAS, we as Christians are called to follow the mandates of Scripture and to work for justice wherever injustice is found;

WHEREAS, the Decolonization Committee of the United Nations has since 1972 recognized that Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States;

WHEREAS, the United Nations has declared this the decade to end colonialism;

WHEREAS, Puerto Rico is one of the last remaining colonial possessions in the world;

WHEREAS, the United States is one of the few who refuse to recognize that Puerto Rico is its colony;

WHEREAS, the Puerto Rican people have never been consulted as to their status since the 1898 invasion of Puerto Rico by the United States;

WHEREAS, the Puerto Rican people have suffered under colonization for 498 years;

WHEREAS, 17 Puerto Rican women and men, whose only crime has been to advocate the cause of Puerto Rico's independence, have been tried unjustly, sentenced, jailed, and denied the basic human rights afforded common prisoners;

WHEREAS, 18 of the Puerto Ricans have invoked the international law status of Prisoners of War taking refuge in the Geneva Convention of 1949 and resulting Protocols adopted by the United Nations;

WHEREAS, the "Freedom Now!" campaign is working toward the freedom of the prisoners of conscience;

WHEREAS, the colonial situation of Puerto Rico is dehumanizing and immoral.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod demands that President Bush and the Congress undertake a process for Puerto Ricans to achieve self-determination and, as a gesture of good will, take the following steps, which are part of any legitimate process of self-determination:

- ◆ grant immediate and unconditional amnesty to all Puerto Rican prisoners of conscience (as defined by Amnesty International) and political prisoners;
- ◆ grant amnesty to those advocates of independence in exile;
- ◆ cease prosecution and persecution of advocates of independence.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod calls upon the United Church of Christ to be involved in the justice work in the following areas:

- ◆ support the "Freedom Now!" campaign through the use of petitions and presence and support during trials of advocates of independence;
- ◆ engage in an educational campaign on issues of Puerto Rico;
- ◆ urge local churches to adopt a prisoner of conscience;
- ◆ encourage local church members to write to their national representatives;
- ◆ request the President of the United Church of Christ to make pastoral visits to prisoners of conscience to offer the support of the church.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod reaffirms the Seventeenth General Synod Resolution "Ministry of Prisoners of Conscience."

## IN RECOGNITION OF 100 YEARS OF U.S. COLONIALISM IN SIX ISLAND NATIONS

95-GS-63 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod adopts the Resolution "In Recognition of 100 Years of U.S. Colonialism in Six Island Nations."

WHEREAS the prophet Isaiah announced the pardon of sin (40:1-2), saw Cyrus as Yahweh's anointed instrument of liberation (45:1-5), interpreted suffering as redemptive, and called the people of Israel to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives and liberty to the oppressed (61:1-2);

WHEREAS Jesus proclaimed that the time (kairos) had come for God's reign of justice and liberation to be fulfilled (Mark 1:15 and Luke 4:16-19);

WHEREAS the year 1998 will be the 100th anniversary of the U.S. acquisition of the lands of Guam, Hawai'i, Eastern (American) Samoa, the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico;

WHEREAS the United Nations, in recognition of the violent and destructive nature of colonialism, has declared this the Decade of Decolonization, so that there will be no colonies at the close of this millennium;

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ, as a Just Peace Church, is called to oppose the sins of racism, colonialism and greed; and

WHEREAS the Eighteenth General Synod affirmed the rights of Native

Hawaiians and Puerto Ricans to self-determination;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod declares its solidarity with the peoples of Guam, Eastern (American) Samoa, Hawai'i, the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico, and also declares its perception of 1998 as a kairos moment, a time to join the United Nations in bringing an end to colonialism in this millennium;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod calls on all settings of the United Church of Christ, in collaboration, where possible, with ecumenical, interfaith and secular partners:

- 1) To engage in an intensive process of study and reflection about various aspects of colonialism, including the history of sugar, environmental and cultural destruction, the role of the church and its missionaries, tourism, and the political status of the various colonies of the United States of America;
- 2) To accompany, support, and advocate for colonized peoples in their struggles to overcome mental spiritual, and physical colonization, and in their struggles to assert their rights for land, culture, language, and other aspects of self-determination; and
- 3) In accordance with the U.N., to support the release of prisoners of conscience in the United States incarcerated because of their actions to resist U.S. colonialism.

**PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**

Approved by the Board of Directors, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, Dallas, Texas, February 10, 1995.

WHEREAS, one of the foundations of Christian faith is pardon and reconciliation;

WHEREAS, our Lord Jesus Christ has called us to care for those in prison and those who are outcasts,

WHEREAS, the United States has consistently denied the Puerto Rican people the right of self-determination according to established United Nations' decolonization procedures;

WHEREAS, in United States prisons today fifteen Puerto Rican women and men, political prisoners, are serving the equivalent of life sentences for their activities in favor of independence and self-determination of Puerto Rico;

WHEREAS, precedent existed when President Jimmy Carter exercised the constitutional power of pardon to release Puerto Rican Nationalists;

WHEREAS, throughout the world one of the initial steps toward reconciliation and peaceful coexistence is historically the release of political prisoners;

WHEREAS, their sentences are disproportionately lengthy compared to sentences given to people who have committed heinous anti-social acts;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that in the spirit of reconciliation throughout the world we call upon the President of the United States to exercise the constitutional power of pardon to grant immediate and unconditional release to the many Puerto Rican women and men in U.S. prisons for their actions in favor of self-determination and independence.

**FREE THE PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**

General Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1996

Today, we have fourteen Puerto Rican political prisoners in the U.S. prison system. These men and women have received sentences that are excessive and geared towards punishing political activity more than the stated crimes and for refusing to participate in the US judicial system process based on their own conscientious objection. The average sentence among this group is 71.6 years for the men, and 72.8 years for the women.

A total of thirty Puerto Rican prisoners refused to participate in the U.S. court system because of their belief that the US government was a colonial and enemy power. They requested a war court trial and were denied. Some of these thirty have served their sentences; others were let go because no valid case could be brought against them.

The United Nations' resolutions on decolonization have clearly established that colonialism is a crime, and recognize a colonized people's right to end colonialism. The United Nations also recognizes that these resolutions

and laws apply to Puerto Rico. For many years the United Nations' Decolonization Committee has approved resolutions recognizing the inalienable right of Puerto Rico's people to independence and self-determination. The injustice suffered under Puerto Rico's colonial reality cannot be overlooked. President Bush admitted that the people of Puerto Rico have never been consulted as equals on their political status.

The call for the release of these prisoners enjoys wide support in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and internationally. Many civic, religious, and international organizations have also joined in the effort.

We, as Christians, have been called to identify with the prisoners and their needs. We have been called to bring justice to them when injustice has taken place (Luke 4:18; Matthew 25:36).

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church advocate for justice and freedom for the Puerto Rican political prisoners, Furthermore, that a letter from the General Conference Secretary be sent to the President of the United States asking him to grant pardon, because they have more than sufficiently served their sentence, to all 14 Puerto Rican political prisoners that are presently found in federal and state prisons. In addition, that a copy of the letter be forwarded to Dr. Luis Nieves Falcon, coordinator of the effort to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners.

**PUERTO RICAN  
POLITICAL PRISONERS**

Episcopal Church of Puerto Rico  
88th Annual Diocesan Assembly,  
16th as an Autonomous Church  
October 22, 1995

WHEREAS, the evangelical mandate ordains us to be agents of reconciliation, peace, pardon, and justice, and

WHEREAS, our Episcopal Church of Puerto Rico has faithfully carried out this mandate; and

WHEREAS, the political action and the struggle for self-determination of the peoples responds, in our national case, to an unresolved problem; and

WHEREAS, that situation is the real motivation of our political prisoners in the United States and is NEVER a social crime against our people, and;

WHEREAS, it has been proved that the sentences imposed in these cases are exaggerated and disproportionate in comparison with the grave crimes committed by other citizens of this country;

THEREFORE, the 88th Annual Diocesan Assembly of the Episcopal Church of Puerto Rico, the 16th as an Autonomous Church, resolves to:

1. Ask the Honorable William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States of North America, to grant unconditional and immediate amnesty to the Puerto Rican patriots imprisoned in the United States; and

2. Urge the Department of Justice of the United States and its Bureau of Prisons to respect the full human rights and dignity of these men and women; and

3. Recommend to our Diocese the naming of one or more clergy or lay people to represent our church in the efforts organized by other churches and organizations in favor of this cause; and

4. Suggest to our Diocese the writing of a pastoral letter of Advent and Christmas, expressing our prayers, accompaniment, and solidarity to the imprisoned patriots, enclosing a copy of this resolution; and

5. Send a copy of this resolution and the pastoral letter to the press, radio, and television of the country.

**IN CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY FOR  
THE EXCARCERATION OF THE  
PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL  
PRISONERS**

General Assembly of the United  
Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico  
January 26-28, 1996

Whereas: Our lord Jesus Christ identified himself with the underprivileged in affirming: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matt. 25:40b) NRSV

Whereas: The Good News had a social dimension, since Jesus' actions directly impacted those persons

discarded by society: "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed..." (Matt. 11:5a) NRSV

Whereas: The Church, in affirming itself as bearer of Good News, is inheritor of the prophetic tradition that establishes that the cultic practice agreeable to the Lord consists in "loosen(ing) the chains of injustice, to undo(ing) the thongs of the yoke, let(ting) the oppressed go free..." (Is. 58:6)

Whereas: The previous affirmations commit the Church to be a promoter of justice and mercy through concrete expressions and actions, in its social context.

Whereas: The rights of these sisters and brothers are continually violated in the following ways: sentencing without possibility for parole, solitary confinement of 23 hours daily, refusal of regular visits by family and members of the community, refusal to congregate in chapel to give expression to their faith, and violations to their physical and psychological integrity.

Whereas: The sentences meted out to the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners are disproportionate and do not compare with similar sentences given to common prisoners. For example, the average amount of years served in jail by a person accused of homicide in the United States is eight. These political prisoners, without being accused of homicide, have already, in almost all cases, served twice this amount.

Alejandrina Torres, sentenced to 35 years, Edwin Cortés, sentenced to 35 years, Alberto Rodríguez, sentenced to 35 years, Antonio Camacho Negrón, sentenced to 35 years, Juan Segarra Palmer, sentenced to 55 years, Dylcia Pagán, sentenced to 63 years, Elizam Escobar, sentenced to 68 years, Oscar López Rivera, sentenced 70 years, Carlos Alberto Torres, sentenced to 78 years, Adolfo Matos, sentenced to 78 years, Lucy Rodríguez, sentenced to 83 years, Alicia Rodríguez, sentenced to 85 years, Carmen Valentín, sentenced to 98 years, Ricardo Jiménez, sentenced to 98 years, Luis Rosa, sentenced to 105 years.

Whereas: The human rights violation here mentioned are injustices of the judicial system of the United States.

Whereas: On December 9th of 1994, the New York Times (p. A19) published an open letter to President Clinton which was signed by a wide segment of the Puerto Rican government including: Sen. Roberto Rexach Benítez, Senate President; Rep. Zaida Hernández Torres, Representative to the House of Representatives; and Sen. Miguel Hernández Agosto, Minority Leader for the PPD in the Senate, who urged the President "in the best spirit of reconciliation and the search for peace which is prevailing in the world today as reflected in your initiatives towards enhanced understanding among the people of South Africa, Haiti, the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to exercise your constitutional power of pardon, as have so many presidents before you, to free these incarcerated Puerto Ricans."

Therefore, let it be resolved:

1. That this assembly condemns all human rights violations to which our sisters and brothers have been subjected.
2. That we join our voices with a wide sector of our community soliciting clemency and the expedient liberation of these prisoners.
3. That the officers of this denomination—the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico—write a letter of pastoral care to each political prisoner on behalf of the our church.
4. That our sentiment expressed in this resolution be communicated to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Department of Justice, and all other pertinent secular or religious authorities.

**IN RELATION TO THE  
REMEMBERING IN PRAYER OF  
THE FAMILIES OF THE PUERTO  
RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS  
AND PRISONERS OF  
CONSCIENCE IN THE PRISONS  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Puerto Rico, February, 1996

1. WHEREAS: The Church has chosen the theme of the Family, Consecration and Mission for ample discussion by this Assembly, and the aspect of mission extends to all

families, including those who are separated for diverse reasons.

2. WHEREAS: The mission impels us to go to the marginalized, the hungry, thirsty, sick, imprisoned, to extend them our solidarity, our compassion, and mercy. (Mt. 25)

3. WHEREAS: In the United States, there are 15 men and women prisoners, separated from their families, for defending an issue of conscience, which is to believe in the independence of Puerto Rico.

4. WHEREAS: The sentences of these persons will keep them permanently separated from their families, without having committed violent acts that caused death to anyone. They have been sentenced to life in prison and given sentences which are totally disproportionate to the acts they committed.

5. WHEREAS: A broad sector of Puerto Rican society, including churches, the Bar Association, Congressional representatives in the United States and noted personalities in Puerto Rico have advocated for the liberation of these prisoners.

6. WHEREAS: It is in the Church where the mercy and compassion of God in Jesus Christ is manifest, even for the imprisoned.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ in Puerto Rico) remembers and prays for the political prisoners and

prisoners of conscience imprisoned in the United States.

2. That it send a delegation, which in some moment of this year visit some of these prisoners as a sign of our presence and solidarity and that it remain alert regarding their situation and that of their families.

### **PRESIDENTIAL PARDON FOR THE PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**

Baptist Church of Puerto Rico, 1996

WHEREAS: Pardon and reconciliation are essential foundations of Christianity. (2 Cor. 5:18)

WHEREAS: Jesus invites us to care for those who are prisoners and the marginalized. (Isaiah 58)

WHEREAS: The defense of human rights constitutes an essential aspect of the Christian ethic.

WHEREAS: The above affirmations commit the Church to promote justice and mercy through concrete actions and expressions in its social context.

WHEREAS: In US prisons there are fifteen Puerto Rican women and men, completing sentences equivalent to life in prison for their actions in favor of the right of self-determination of the Puerto Rican people.

WHEREAS: The sentences imposed are disproportionate in comparison with the sentences commonly imposed for crimes which represent far greater gravity for society, such as homicide. For example, the average of years

completed in prison in the United States for a person convicted of homicide is 8 years.

WHEREAS: These prisoners, without having been accused of homicide, in the majority have served twice that sentence: Alejandrina Torres, 35 years; Edwin Cortés, 35 years; Alberto Rodríguez, 35 years; Juan Segarra Palmer, 55 years; Antonio Camacho Negrón, 58 years; Dylcia Pagán, 63 years; Elizam Escobar, 68 years; Oscar López Rivera, 70 years; Carlos Alberto Torres, 78 years; Adolfo Matos, 78 years; Lucy Rodríguez, 83 years; Alicia Rodríguez, 85 years; Carmen Valentín, 98 years; Ricardo Jiménez, 98 years; and Luis Rosa, 105 years.

WHEREAS: The rights of these brothers and sisters are continually violated: sentences without the possibility of freedom of speech, solitary confinement for 23 hours per day, denial of regular visits by relatives and members of the community, prevention of gathering in the chapel to give expression to their faith, and violations of their physical and psychological integrity.

WHEREAS: One of the essential ways towards reconciliation and peaceful living together of all the peoples historically has been the liberation of political prisoners.

WHEREAS: The New York Times, in its December 19, 1994 issue (page A19) published an open letter to President Clinton signed by a broad sector of the Puerto Rican government, such as: Sen. Rex Benítez, President of the Senate; Rep. Zaida

Hernández Torres, President of the House of Representatives; Sen. Miguel Hernández Agosto, leader of the minority of the Democratic Popular Party; who, along with others, urge "that in the best spirit of reconciliation and the search for peace which is prevailing in the world today as reflected in your initiatives towards enhanced understanding among the people of South Africa, Haiti, the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to exercise your constitutional power of pardon, as have so many presidents before you, to free these incarcerated Puerto Ricans."

WHEREAS: The Episcopal Church in Puerto Rico, the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico, and the Disciples of Christ of Puerto Rico have approved similar resolutions.

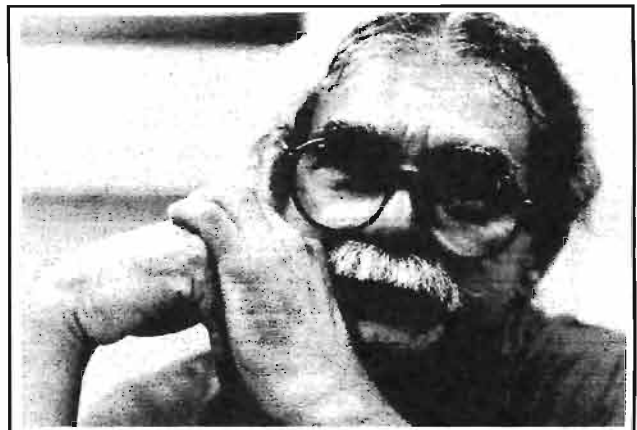
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by this Assembly:

1. A vote of support for the liberty of these 15 Puerto Ricans in North American prisons.
2. In the spirit of reconciliation which characterizes the world, to solicit the President of the United States of North America that he exercise his constitutional power and grant a presidential pardon which guarantees the immediate and unconditional liberation of the political prisoners in prisons in the United States of North America.
3. We unite with the demand of a great part of the community soliciting clemency and the prompt liberation of these brothers and sisters.

4. The Board of Directors, or a person of their selection, write in the name of our denomination a pastoral letter directed to each of the prisoners.

5. This resolution be sent to the Press, through press release and a press conference, to the Governor of Puerto Rico, the President of the Senate of Puerto Rico, the President of the House of Representatives of Puerto Rico, the President and General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches and the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico.

photo by Antonio Pérez, ¡Exito! Newspaper



Oscar López Rivera, USP Marion, IL

## APPENDIX F: UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS

### DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

Resolution 1514  
Adopted by the General Assembly  
December 14, 1960

The General Assembly,  
Mindful of the determination proclaimed by the peoples of the world in the Charter of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,  
Conscious of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, and of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,  
Recognizing the passionate yearning for freedom in all dependent peoples and the decisive role of such peoples in the attainment of their independence,  
Aware of the increasing conflicts resulting from the denial of or impediments in the way of the freedom of such peoples, which constitute a serious threat to world peace,  
Considering the important role of the United Nations in assisting the

movement for independence in trust and non-self-governing territories,  
Recognizing that the peoples of the world ardently desire the end of colonialism in all its manifestations,  
Convinced that the continued existence of colonialism prevents the development of international economic cooperation, impedes the social, cultural and economic development of dependent peoples and militates against the United Nations ideal of universal peace,  
Affirming that peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic cooperation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law,  
Believing that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith,  
Welcoming the emergence in recent years of a large number of dependent territories into freedom and independence, and recognizing the increasingly powerful trends towards freedom in such territories which have not yet attained independence,  
Convinced that all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory,  
Solemnly proclaims the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations;  
And to this end

Declares that:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation.
2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
3. Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.
4. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.
5. Immediate steps shall be taken, in trust and non-self-governing territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or color, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom.
6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national

unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations.

7. All states shall observe faithfully and strictly the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the present Declaration on the basis of equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of all states and respect for the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity.

**PROGRAMME OF ACTION  
FOR THE FULL  
IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE DECLARATION ON THE  
GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE  
TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND  
PEOPLES**

Resolution 2621 (XXV)  
Adopted by the General Assembly  
1862nd plenary meeting  
12 October 1970

The General Assembly,  
Having decided to hold a special commemorative session on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,

Considering that, by arousing world public opinion and promoting practical action for the speedy liquidation of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations, the Declaration has played and will continue to play an important role in assisting the peoples under colonial domination in their

struggle for freedom and independence,

Conscious of the fact that, although many colonial countries and peoples have achieved freedom and independence in the last ten years, the system of colonialism continues to exist in many areas of the world,  
Reaffirming that all peoples have the right to self-determination and independence and that the subjection of the peoples to alien domination constitutes a serious impediment to the maintenance of international peace and security and the development of peaceful relations among nations,

1. Declares the further continuation of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations a crime which constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the principles of international law;
2. Reaffirms the inherent right of colonial peoples to struggle by all necessary means at their disposal against colonial Powers which suppress their aspiration for freedom and independence;
3. Adopts the following programme of action to assist in the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples:

(1) Member States shall do their utmost to promote, in the United Nations and the international institutions and organizations within the United Nations system, effective measures for the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in all Trust Territories, Non-Self-

Governing Territories and other colonial Territories, large and small, including the adoption by the Security Council of effective measures against Governments and régimes which engage in any form of repression of colonial peoples, which would seriously impede the maintenance of international peace and security.

(2) Member States shall render all necessary moral and material assistance to the peoples of colonial Territories in their struggle to attain freedom and independence.

(3) (a) Member States shall intensify their efforts to promote the implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to Territories under colonial domination.  
(b) In this connection, the General Assembly draws the attention of the Security Council to the need to continue to give special attention to the problems of southern Africa by adopting measures to ensure the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and its own resolutions, and in particular:

- (i) To widen the scope of the sanctions against the illegal régime of Southern Rhodesia by declaring mandatory all the measures laid down in Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations;
- (ii) To give careful consideration to the question of imposing sanctions upon South Africa and Portugal, in view of their refusal to carry

out the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

(iii) To give urgent consideration, with a view to promoting the speedy elimination of colonialism, to the question of imposing fully and unconditionally, under international supervision, an embargo on arms of all kinds to the Government of South Africa and the illegal régime of Southern Rhodesia;

(iv) To consider urgently the adoption of measures to prevent the supply of arms of all kinds to Portugal, as such arms enable that country to deny the right of self-determination and independence to the peoples of the Territories under its domination.

(c) Member States shall also intensify their efforts to oppose collaboration between the régimes of South Africa and Portugal and the illegal racist régime of Southern Rhodesia for the preservation of colonialism in southern Africa and to end the political, military, economic and other forms of aid received by the above-mentioned régimes, which enables them to persist in their policy of colonial domination.

(4) Member States shall wage a vigorous and sustained campaign against activities and practices of foreign economic, financial and other interests operating in colonial Territories for the benefit and on behalf of colonial Powers and their allies, as these constitute a major obstacle to the

achievement of the goals embodied in resolution 1514 (XV). Member States shall consider the adoption of necessary steps to have their nationals and companies under their jurisdiction discontinue such activities and practices; these steps should also aim at preventing the systematic influx of foreign immigrants into colonial Territories, which disrupts the integrity and social, political and cultural unity of the peoples under colonial domination.

(5) Member States shall carry out a sustained and vigorous campaign against all military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration, as such activities and arrangements constitute an obstacle to the full implementation of resolution 1514 (XV).

(6) (a) All freedom fighters under detention shall be treated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949.<sup>2</sup>

(b) The specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations shall intensify their activities related to the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV).

(c) Representatives of liberation movements shall be invited, whenever necessary, by the United Nations and other international organizations within the United Nations system to participate in an appropriate capacity in the proceedings of those organs relating to their countries.

(d) Efforts shall be intensified to provide increased educational opportunities for the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories. All States shall render greater assistance in this field, both individually through programmes in the countries concerned and collectively by contributions through the United Nations.

(7) All States shall undertake measures aimed at enhancing public awareness of the need for active assistance in the achievement of complete decolonization and, in particular, creating satisfactory conditions or activities by national and international non-governmental organizations in support of the peoples under colonial domination.

(8) The United Nations as well as all States shall intensify their efforts in the field of public information in the area of decolonization through all media, including publications, radio and television. Of special importance will be programmes relating to United Nations activities on decolonization, the situation in colonial Territories and the struggle being waged by colonial peoples and the national liberation movements.

(9) The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples shall continue to examine the full compliance of all States with the Declaration and with other

2. United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75 (1950), No. 972.

relevant resolutions on the question of decolonization. The question of territorial size, geographical isolation and limited resources should in no way delay the implementation of the Declaration. Where resolution 1514 (XV) has not been fully implemented with regard to a given Territory, the General Assembly shall continue to bear responsibility for that Territory until such time as the people concerned has had an opportunity to exercise freely its right to self-determination and independence in accordance with the Declaration. The Special Committee is hereby directed:

- (a) To continue to assist the General Assembly in finding the best ways and means for the final liquidation of colonialism;
- (b) To continue to give special consideration to the views expressed orally or in written communications by representatives of the peoples in the colonial Territories;
- (c) To continue to send visiting missions to the colonial Territories and to hold meetings at places where it can best obtain first-hand information on the situation in colonial Territories, as well as to continue to hold meetings away from Headquarters as appropriate;
- (d) To assist the General Assembly in making arrangements, in co-operation with the administering Powers, for securing a United Nations presence in the colonial Territories to participate in the elaboration of the procedural

measures for the implementation of the Declaration and to observe the final stages of the process of decolonization in the Territories;

- (e) To prepare draft rules and regulations for visiting missions for approval by the General Assembly.

### **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE COMBATANTS STRUGGLING AGAINST COLONIAL AND ALIEN DOMINATION AND RACIST RÉGIMES**

Resolution 3103 (XXVII)  
Adopted by the General Assembly  
2197th plenary meeting  
12 December 1973

The General Assembly,  
Recalling that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in the dignity and worth of the human person,  
Recalling resolution 2444 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968 in which the General Assembly, *inter alia*, recognized the need for applying basic humanitarian principles in armed conflicts,  
Recognizing further the importance of respecting the Hague Convention of 1907,<sup>15</sup> the Geneva Protocol of 1925,<sup>16</sup> the Geneva Conventions of 1949,<sup>17</sup> and other universally recognized norms of modern international law for the protection of human rights in armed conflicts,  
Reaffirming that the continuation of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations, as noted in General Assembly resolution 2621 (XXV) of 12 October 1970, is a crime and that

colonial peoples have the inherent right to struggle by all necessary means at their disposal against colonial Powers and alien domination in exercise of their right of self-determination recognized in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,<sup>18</sup>

Stressing that the policy of apartheid and racial oppression has been condemned by all countries and peoples, and that the pursuing of such a policy has been recognized as an international crime,

Reaffirming the declarations made in General Assembly resolutions 2548 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969 and 2708 (XXV) of 14 December 1970 that the practice of using mercenaries against national liberation movements in the colonial Territories constitutes a criminal act,

Recalling the numerous appeals of the General Assembly to the colonial Powers and those occupying foreign territories as well as to the racist régimes set forth, *inter alia*, in resolutions 2383 (XXIII) of 7 November 1968, 2508 (XXIV) of 21 November 1969, 2547 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969, 2652 (XXV) of 3 December 1970, 2678 (XXV) of 9 December 1970, 2707 (XXV) of 14 December 1970, 2795 (XXVI) and 2796 (XXVI) of 10 December 1971 and 2871 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, to ensure the application to the fighters for freedom and self-determination of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949,<sup>19</sup> and the Geneva Convention relative to the

Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,<sup>20</sup>

Deeply concerned at the fact that, despite the numerous appeals of the General Assembly, compliance with the provisions of the said Conventions has not yet been ensured,

Noting that the treatment of the combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes captured as prisoners still remains inhuman,

Recalling its resolutions 2674 (XXV) of 9 December 1970 and 2852 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, in which it pointed out the need for the elaboration of additional international instruments and norms envisioning, inter alia, the increase of the protection of persons struggling for freedom against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes,

Solemnly proclaims the following basic principles of the legal status of the combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes without prejudice to their elaboration in future within the framework of the development of international law applying to the protection of human rights in armed conflicts:

1. The struggle of peoples under colonial and alien domination and racist régimes for the implementation of their right to self-determination and independence is legitimate and in full accordance with the principles of international law.

2. Any attempt to suppress the struggle against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on Principles of International

Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples<sup>21</sup> and constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

3. The armed conflicts involving the struggle of peoples against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes are to be regarded as international armed conflicts in the sense of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and the legal status envisaged to apply to the combatants in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and other international instruments is to apply to the persons engaged in armed struggle against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes.

4. The combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes captured as prisoners are to be accorded the status of prisoners of war and their treatment should be in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of 12 August 1949.

5. The use of mercenaries by colonial and racist régimes against the national liberation movements struggling for their freedom and independence from the yoke of colonialism and alien domination is considered to be a criminal act and the mercenaries should accordingly be punished as criminals.

6. The violation of the legal status of the combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes in the course of armed conflicts entails full responsibility in accordance with the norms of international law.

15. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

16. League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XCIV, No. 2138, p. 65.

17. United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

18. Resolution 2625 (XXV), annex.

19. United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 1.

20. *Ibid.*, No. 973, p. 287.

21. Resolution 1514 (XIV).

**PROTECTION OF PERSONS  
DETAINED OR IMPRISONED  
AS A RESULT OF THEIR  
STRUGGLE AGAINST  
APARTHEID, RACISM AND  
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION,  
COLONIALISM, AGGRESSION  
AND FOREIGN OCCUPATION  
AND FOR SELF-  
DETERMINATION,  
INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIAL  
PROGRESS FOR THEIR PEOPLE**

Resolution 32/122

Adopted by the General Assembly  
105th plenary meeting  
16 December 1977

The General Assembly,  
Recalling its resolutions 3246 (XXIX)  
of 29 November 1974, 3382 (XXX) of  
10 November 1975, 31/34 of Novem-  
ber 1976 and 32/14 of 7 November  
1977 in which it reaffirmed the  
legitimacy of the struggle of peoples  
for liberation from colonial and foreign  
domination by all available means,  
including armed struggle, and de-  
manded full respect for the basic  
human rights of all individuals de-  
tained or imprisoned as a result of  
their struggle for self-determination  
and independence, and their immedi-  
ate release,

Noting with appreciation the progress  
achieved in the elimination of colonial-  
ism and the realization of the right of  
peoples to self-determination,  
Expressing its serious concern  
regarding the continuing denial of the  
right to self-determination of the  
peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe and  
Palestine and other peoples fighting  
for the realization of their right to self-

determination and their liberation from  
colonialism and racism,  
Recalling that the Security Council, in  
its resolution 392 (1976) of 19 June  
1976, once again strongly condemned  
the policy of apartheid as a crime  
against the conscience and dignity of  
mankind and a serious breach of  
international peace and security and  
emphasized the legitimacy of the  
struggle of the people of South Africa  
for the elimination of apartheid and  
racial discrimination,

Emphasizing the necessity of respect  
for human rights and fundamental  
freedoms for all, without distinction as  
to race, sex, language or religion,  
Recalling its resolution 3103 (XXVIII)  
of 12 December 1973, in which it  
solemnly proclaimed the basic  
principles of the legal status of the  
combatants struggling against colonial  
and alien domination and racist  
régimes,

1. Expresses its solidarity with the  
fighters for national independence  
and social progress of their  
people, against colonialism,  
apartheid, racism and foreign  
occupation;
2. Emphasizes again that any  
attempts to suppress the struggle  
against colonial domination and  
racist régimes are incompatible  
with the Charter of the United  
Nations and the Universal  
Declaration of Human Rights;
3. Demands the release of all  
individuals detained or imprisoned  
as a result of their struggle  
against apartheid, racism and  
racial discrimination, colonialism,  
aggression and foreign occupa-  
tion and for self-determination,

- independence and social  
progress for their people;
4. Insists that Israel and the racist  
minority régimes in southern  
Africa should immediately and  
unconditionally release all  
individuals detained or imprisoned  
because of their struggle for self-  
determination and national  
independence against apartheid,  
all forms of racism and racial  
discrimination, colonialism and  
foreign occupation;
  5. Calls upon Member States to  
provide support and assistance in  
all fields to the peoples fighting for  
their liberation from colonialism,  
foreign occupation, racism and  
racial discrimination;
  6. Requests the Commission on  
Human Rights to continue to give  
particular attention to the question  
of the release of individuals  
detained or imprisoned as a result  
of their participation in the  
struggle against apartheid, racism  
and racial discrimination, colonial-  
ism, aggression and foreign  
occupation and for self-determina-  
tion, independence and social  
progress for their people;
  7. Requests the Commission on  
Human Rights to submit, through  
the Economic and Social Council, a  
report on the implementation of the  
present resolution to the General  
Assembly at its thirty-third session.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

Resolution 33/24

Adopted by the General Assembly  
63rd plenary meeting  
29 November 1978

The General Assembly,  
Recalling its resolutions 2649 (XXV) of November 30 1970, 2055 (XXVII) of 12 December 1972, 3070 (XXVIII) of 30 November 1973, 3246 (XXIX) of 29 November 1974, 3382 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/34 of 30 November 1976 and 32/14 of 7 November 1977, and Security Council resolutions 418 (1977) of 4 November 1977 and 437 (1978) of 10 October 1978,  
Recalling also its resolutions 2465 (XXIII) of 20 December 1968, 2548 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969, 2708 (XXV) of 14 December 1970, 3103 (XXVIII) of 12 December 1973 and 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974 on the use and recruitment of mercenaries against national liberation movements and sovereign States,  
Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General<sup>1</sup> of the letter dated 14 June 1978 from the representative of Senegal<sup>2</sup> transmitting the text of the resolutions adopted by the Ninth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, and of the letter dated 6 September 1978 from the representative of Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup> transmitting the

documents of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries,  
Recalling the Mapute Declaration in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia and the Programme of Action for the liberation of Zimbabwe and Namibia, adopted by the International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia,<sup>4</sup> held at Mapute from 16 to 21 May 1977, and the declaration adopted by the World Conference for Action against Apartheid,<sup>5</sup> held at Lagos from 22 to 26 August 1977,  
Taking note of the Political Declaration<sup>6</sup> adopted by the First Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States, held at Cairo from 7 to 9 March 1977,  
Considering that the activities of Israel, in particular the denial to the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and independence, constitute a serious and increasing threat to international peace and security,  
Reaffirming its faith in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and the importance of its implementation,  
Reaffirming the importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, national sovereignty and territorial integrity and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples as imperatives for the full enjoyment of all human rights,  
Affirming that "bantustanization" is incompatible with genuine indepen-

dence, unity, and national sovereignty and has the effect of perpetuating the power of the white minority and the racist system of apartheid in South Africa,  
Reaffirming the obligation of all Member States to comply with the principles of the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations regarding the exercise of the right to self-determination by peoples under colonial and alien domination,  
Welcoming the independence of Solomon Islands,  
Reaffirming the national unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros,  
Indignant at the continued violations of the human rights of the peoples still under colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation, the continuation of the illegal occupation of Namibia and South Africa's attempts to dismember its territory, the perpetuation of the racist minority régimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa and the denial to the Palestinian people of their inalienable national rights,  
1. Calls upon all States to implement fully and faithfully the resolutions of the United Nations regarding the exercise of the right to self-determination by peoples under colonial and alien domination;  
2. Reaffirms the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, particularly armed struggle;  
3. Reaffirms the inalienable right of the peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe, of the Palestinian

people and of all peoples under alien and colonial domination to self-determination, national independence, territorial integrity, national unity and sovereignty without external interference;

4. Demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of France from the Comorian island of Mayotte, which is an integral part of the Federal and Islamic Republic of the Comoros;

5. Condemns the policy of "bantustanization" and reiterates its support for the oppressed people of South Africa in their just and legitimate struggle against the racist minority régime in Pretoria;

6. Condemns the violations of the sanctions ordered by the Security Council against the illegal rebel régime in Southern Rhodesia and accordingly deplores the decision of the Government of the United States of America to allow Ian Smith to enter the United States;

7. Reaffirms that the practice of using mercenaries against national liberation movements and sovereign States constitutes a criminal act and that the mercenaries themselves are criminals, and calls upon the Governments of all countries to enact legislation declaring the recruitment, financing and training of mercenaries in their territory and the transit of mercenaries through their territory to be punishable offences and prohibiting their nationals from serving as mercenaries, and to report on such legislation to the Secretary-General;

8. Condemns the policies of those members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and of other countries whose political, economic, military, nuclear, strategic, cultural and sporting relations with the racist régimes in southern Africa and elsewhere encourage these régimes to persist in their suppression of the aspirations of the peoples for self-determination and independence;

9. Again demands the immediate application of the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa imposed under Security Council resolution 418 (1977), by all countries and particularly by those countries that maintain military co-operation with the racist Pretoria régime;

10. Strongly condemns all Governments which do not recognize the right to self-determination and independence of all peoples still under colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation, notably the peoples of Africa and the Palestinian people;

11. Strongly condemns the ever increasing massacres of innocent and defenceless people, including women and children, by the racist minority régimes of southern Africa in their desperate attempt to thwart the legitimate demands of the people;

12. Further condemns the expansionist activities of Israel in the Middle East, as well as the continuous bombing of civilian Arab and, in particular, Palestinian populations and the destruction of their villages and encampments,

which constitutes a serious obstacle to the realization of the self-determination and independence of the Palestinian people;

13. Demands the immediate release of all persons detained or imprisoned as a result of their struggle for self-determination and independence, full respect for their fundamental individual rights and the observance of article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, under which no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;<sup>7</sup>

14. Notes with appreciation the material and other forms of assistance that peoples under colonial and foreign rule continue to receive from Governments, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and calls for a maximization of their assistance;

15. Takes note of the studies by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, dealing with the following subjects:

(a) Historical and current development of the right to self-determination on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and other instruments adopted by United Nations organs, with particular reference to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;<sup>8</sup>

(b) Implementation of United Nations resolutions relating to the right of peoples under

colonial and foreign domination to self-determination;<sup>9</sup>

and expresses its thanks to their authors;

16. Requests the Secretary-General to give maximum publicity to the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and to give the widest possible publicity to the struggle being waged by oppressed peoples for the realization of their self-determination and national independence;



*Adolfo Matos Antongiorgi, USP Lompoc*

17. Decides to consider this item again at its thirty-fourth session on the basis of the reports that Governments, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have been requested to submit concerning the strengthening of assistance to colonial Territories and peoples under foreign domination and control.

---

1. A/33/199 and Add. 1 and 2.

2. A/33/151.

3. A/33/206

4. A/32/109/Rev.1-S/12344/Rev.1, annex V. For the printed text, see Official records of the Security Council, Thirty-second Year, Supplement for July, August, and September 1977.

5. A/CONF.91/9 (United Nations publication. Sales No. E.77.XIV.2 and corrigendum), sect. K.

6. A/32/61, annex I.

7. General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

8. E/CN.4/Sub.2/404 (Vol. I-III).

9. E/CN.4/Sub.2/405 (Vol. I and II).

---

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### National Representatives

The Rev. Gerald Cunningham  
Director, Human Rights and Criminal Justice  
Christian Church/Disciples of Christ  
130 E. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
317 635-3113 x373

The Rev. C. Nozomi Ikuta\*,\*\*  
Division of the American Missionary Association  
United Church Board for Homeland Ministries  
700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44115  
216 736-3280 phone/216 736-3263 fax  
IkutaN@UCC.org

The Rev. Eliezer Valentín-Castañón\*,\*\*  
General Board of Church and Society  
of the United Methodist Church  
100 Maryland Ave., NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
202 488-5657 phone  
202 488-5663 fax

Ms. Sammy Toineeta\*\*  
Racial Justice Program  
National Council of Churches  
475 Riverside Drive, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10115  
212 870-2387 phone  
212 870-2265 fax

### Regional Representatives:

Ms. Dora García  
4320 W. Henderson St.  
Chicago, IL 60641  
773 283-6398

Ms. Maureen Flynn-Hart  
Ministry of Social Justice and Outreach  
St. Mark's Church  
1101 Euclid  
Kansas City, MO 64127  
816 455-3014 phone/816 842-3247 fax

Ms. Mitsuye Yamada  
6151 Sierra Bravo Rd.  
Irvine, California 92715  
714 854-8699 phone  
714 854-2570 fax

Ms. Selisse Berry  
Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience/Bay Area  
Ecumenical Peace Institute  
PO Box 9334  
Berkeley, CA 94709  
510 550-7796

Ms. Ana López\*\*  
PO Box 1106  
New York, NY 10035  
212 427-3874 phone/fax

Ms. Muhjah Shakir  
National Plebiscite Education Campaign  
PO Box 3585  
Oakland, CA 94609  
510 635-7933

### Consultants:

Mr. Alejandro Molina\*\*  
National Committee to Free  
Puerto Rican POWs & PPs  
2607 W. Division, Chicago, Illinois 60622  
773 278-0885 phone  
773 278-1633 fax  
PRPOWPP@aol.com

Atty. Jan Susler\*\*  
People's Law Office  
1180 North Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, Illinois 60622  
773 235-0070 phone  
773 235-6699 fax  
peopleslaw@aol.com

All organizations listed for identification purposes. \*Persons from whom additional copies of this resource are available.

\*\*Persons from whom additional information about the Puerto Rican prisoners is available.