

To the People's Tribunal on U.S. Crimes Against Puerto Rico. "Suffocated by Neoliberalism"

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Global Research, October 15, 2018

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean, USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Dear friends and comrades,

On October 27, 2018, activists and witnesses from Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican diaspora, the U.S. and the world will gather in New York City to participate in a tribunal on the crimes of colonialism.

The court will present a people's investigation into the role of the U.S. government during its 120-year colonial rule over Puerto Rico.

They will be joined by renowned Nicaraguan jurist and lawyer Dr. Augusto Zamora, who will serve as prosecutor, and a distinguished jury of U.S. and international human rights leaders.

The United States has attempted to isolate Puerto Rico from its Caribbean, Central and South American neighboring countries through the imposition of the "carimbo," that is U.S. citizenship. Only through resistance and struggle has Puerto Rico been able to maintain its Spanish language, culture and traditions. But now, the Puerto Rican archipelago is in immense danger.

What is happening now is the culmination of a process of national destruction that began on July 25, 1898, when the U.S. military invaded the islands. Privatization of Puerto Rico is being carried out by a dictatorial Fiscal Control Board imposed by the U.S. Congress to manage an illegal and unpayable debt under the law known as "PROMESA" passed in 2016.

Hurricanes Irma and Maria demonstrated in 2017 the power of nature and the failure of capitalism to prioritize the most basic need: the health of our planet. But the aftermath of the hurricanes also demonstrated the criminal cruelty with which the U.S. responded to the devastation, accelerating its plans to restructure Puerto Rico for corporate and imperialist gain.

The Puerto Rican people are being suffocated by a neoliberal economic policy, combined with a colonial political status that holds their sovereignty hostage to Washington.

The neoliberal and colonial vision for a fully privatized Puerto Rico that current policies regarding education reforms and other essential services contemplate: a country bought and "resettled" by capitalist vultures and foreign billionaires, freed of taxes or regulation to exploit an impoverished, badly educated and politically repressed youth.

Ethnic cleansing and population substitution are internationally recognized as crimes. The population is shrinking because thousands of Boricuas (Puerto Ricans) are forced to

emigrate in order to survive. Neoliberals envision a Puerto Rico without Puerto Ricans, echoing the warning of nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos that the United States “wants the cage, but not the birds.”

What is happening in Puerto Rico is different only in scale and duration from the destruction perpetrated by the U.S. elsewhere.

Only a people’s campaign in solidarity with the Puerto Rican struggle for decolonization, self-determination and justice can begin to put an end to the continued presence and domination of the United States, not only in Puerto Rico, but in the Caribbean, Latin America and other countries. We hope that your organization will be able to support this important organizing effort, and that you will be able to join us on October 27, in New York City.

We hope that your organization will attend and promote the Tribunal. There are several ways to help:

- Send a representative to the Tribunal
- Promote the Tribunal in your networks
- Follow the Tribunal’s broadcast on October 27, on the [Tribunal’s Facebook page](#)
- **SEND A SOLIDARITY MESSAGE** to be read during the Tribunal.
- Visit the PuertoRicoTribunal.org web site.

Solidarity is the tenderness of peoples. Only the People can save the People.

We look forward to your collaboration in this struggle that belongs to everyone.

In solidarity,

Berta Joubert-Ceci

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