



The Hispanic National Bar Association urges President Obama to exercise his constitutional power to commute the 55 year sentence of Puerto Rican activist Oscar López Rivera and grant his immediate release.

HISPANIC NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION  
The National Voice of the Hispanic Legal Community

Hon. Barack H. Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500  
August 3, 2015

Re: Statement in the Support of Commuting the Sentence of Oscar López Rivera

Dear President Obama:

The Hispanic National Bar Association urges President Obama to exercise his constitutional power to commute the 55 year sentence of Puerto Rican activist Oscar López Rivera and grant his immediate release. López Rivera, who is 72 years old, has served 34 years of his prison sentence, 13 of which have been in solitary confinement. A Vietnam veteran who earned a Bronze Star for bravery, López Rivera, was a housing activist and helped found the first Latino cultural center in Chicago. He was not charged and convicted of a violent crime, but instead incarcerated for seditious conspiracy and later for conspiracy to escape.

Mr. López Rivera was connected to a Puerto Rican nationalist group, FALN, but he was never charged with any of the bombings attributed to the FALN in the 1970s and 1980s. Notably, a 1980 Chicago Tribune editorial noted that even those bombs placed in the Chicago area, where López Rivera lived, were “placed and timed to damage property rather than persons.” Data demonstrates that around that time, the average sentence for homicide was less than 12 and a half years. As an organization representing the interests of attorneys, judges, legal professionals, and the Latino community, the HNBA is charged with upholding the United States Constitution, including the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against excessive and disproportionate punishment.

The HNBA joins Nobel laureates Desmond Tutu, Mairead Maguire, Former President Jimmy Carter, the government of Puerto Rico, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the American Association of Jurists, the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of State, Councils, and Municipal Employees, and others in requesting the Presidential commutation of the sentence of Oscar López Rivera and his immediate release.

Sincerely,

Cynthia D. Mares National President Hispanic National Bar Association