

Declaration of solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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A national day of protest and general strike have been called in Puerto Rico on July

22 to demand the resignation of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló. Struggle-La Lucha is publishing this solidarity statement from Mexican, Venezuelan and Panamanian workers' leaders and organizations.

We express our solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico in their struggle against the corrupt government of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló. Friday, July 19, marks seven days of massive protests demanding the resignation of the governor and his close associates. Despite attacks with tear gas, rubber bullets, beatings and arrests by the police, the protests have grown in the capital San Juan and have spread to all corners of the island. On Wednesday, July 17, more than 350,000 people marched through the streets of the capital, an unprecedented demonstration.

The protests began after charges and arrests of several heads of government agencies of the Rosselló administration, including former secretary of education Julia Keleher. Keleher, in addition to awarding contracts to relatives, distinguished herself by implementing the privatization of the public education system and by the closure of more than 400 schools. Both teachers' organizations and affected communities have been fighting those policies since 2017. Now the whole people join in the denunciation of Keleher and what she represents: neoliberalism and its sister corruption.

To the accusations against Keleher and other government officials was added the publication of a chat in which Gov. Rosselló, officials of his administration and some close friends shared comments. The more than 800 published pages reveal or suggest a large number of crimes, such as obstructing justice, firing people for political reasons, giving "punishments" to opposition leaders such as Manuel Natal of the Victoria Citizen Movement, and using public funds for private purposes. But above all, the chat exposes the sexist, homophobic and racist attitudes of the participants. It is a living portrait of the mindset of a privileged class that governs the country as its private estate, with total disdain for the population, although they

publicly present themselves as the opposite. In the chat, they mocked the deaths of government critics, the bodies stored after Hurricane María, and the grassroots activists of the governing party.

The people of Puerto Rico have decided that such a person cannot remain governor and have been demanding his resignation for a week.

We know that Rosselló is only part of the problem. Puerto Rico is experiencing an economic crisis that has lasted a decade. Twenty percent of the jobs that existed in 2007 have been lost. The economic crisis has resulted in a public debt crisis, which now reaches \$70 billion. To pay for it, a Fiscal Control Board imposed by the United States Congress is decreeing austerity measures that impoverish the country and lengthen the crisis. That is why the call for resignation is accompanied by the rejection of the FCB and the demand to audit the debt. We have no doubt that the victory against Rosselló will lay the best foundation to continue the struggle on those grounds.

We express our admiration for the persistent struggle of the people of Puerto Rico, an example for the struggling peoples of the world. We demand the release of those arrested or charged as a result of participating in this resistance. We join the call for the immediate resignation of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló.

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From Mexico: Frente Socialista: Frente del Pueblo (FP), Comité de Unidad Popular (CUP), Consejo Popular Magonista (COPM), Partido Revolucionario del Pueblo (PRP), Sendero Socialista (SS), Grupo Obrero Socialista (GOS), Organización Proletaria Emiliano Zapata (OPEZ histórica), Organización Política del Pueblo y los Trabajadores (OPT) and Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT)

