

International solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico

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Tran Duc Thang, of the Communist Party of Vietnam, addresses the 200 delegates from political parties of 30 countries at the international conference

of “Political parties and a new society” in Mexico City from September 22-24.
Photo: VNA

On behalf of the Delegation of Puerto Rico

Press statement

International organizations stand in solidarity with the People of Puerto Rico and demand the government’s compliance with the well-being of the population of this Caribbean and Latin American Nation.

Within the framework of the XXVI Seminar of Political Parties and a New Society, held in Mexico City from September 22 to 24, 2022, seventy-three organizations from the 30 countries present, unanimously expressed their solidarity with the People of Puerto Rico. They also accused both the Puerto Rican colonial administration and the United States government for causing the material conditions that have made a Category 1 hurricane like Fiona cause so many tragedies to the people, a large part of which is without electricity or water. More than 13 people have perished, thousands are at risk, houses have been lost, structures have collapsed, and floods have caused countless tragedies.

The government of Puerto Rico has negligently failed to fulfill its responsibility in maintaining in good condition the infrastructure of our archipelago, thus propelling reservoirs and rivers to easily exceed their limits and endanger the structures and lives of surrounding residents.

It is shameful that in the twenty-first century, the United States possesses Puerto Rico as a colony and imposes a Fiscal Oversight Board (JSF) on it since 2016, under

a “PROMESA Law” that has cruelly been an instrument used for the destruction and impoverishment of the people, taking away the resources of its vital essential services and transferring them to vulture bondholders in a process of collecting an illegitimate debt.

That Fiscal Control Board and the colonial government of Puerto Rico have imposed privatizations that have plunged the people into conditions of great suffering, especially the privatization of energy under the recently created US-Canadian company Luma Energy. The government promoted this company as a world-renowned, experienced company that would improve the country’s energy system and reduce rates.

But the reality is that since Luma assumed control of the country’s energy system in June 2021, the Puerto Rican people have experienced 7 major outages, substation explosions, and service instability causing many losses of domestic and industrial equipment, almost all caused by a lack of proper maintenance of the electrical agency facilities. In addition, they have increased the rate 7 times. And as a punishment to the People and their working class, the experienced labor force of the state energy agency was displaced, replacing it with workers without the required experience, many of them brought from the United States, paying them almost triple the salary that the displaced workers earned.

The cruel inefficiency of Luma and its defense by the colonial government has aggravated the current situation where even hospitals and care centers are without power, putting thousands of lives at risk. Faced with this calamity, the displaced workers of the Electrical Industry and Irrigation Workers’ Union and other national energy unions ask the government for an Executive Order to employ these experienced public servants and thus speed up the energy reconstitution process; however, Governor Pedro Pierluisi rejects this offer that would save Puerto Rican lives and instead prefers to endorse the hiring of foreign workers brought to Puerto

Rico under onerous multimillion-dollar contracts paid by the people.

The eyes of the world are now on Puerto Rico and this terrible situation will be made known as widely as possible. The organizations participating in the XXVI Seminar urge the governments of Puerto Rico and the United States to take action to stop the enormous suffering of the Puerto Rican people.

Mexico City, September 24, 2022

