

From the rejection of anti-immigrant policies to the rejection of the Escensia Project

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March 7, 2025. Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico. Second day of public hearings for the

Esencia project, which proposes a residential-tourism development on 81 plots in the Boquerón area. Photo: Brandon Cruz González / Center for Investigative Journalism.

Last weekend, here in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, thousands of people took to the streets to protest the criminal policies of the local government. While this new administration is taking many actions against the interests of the people, two focal points of aggression have sparked outrage among our people. One, the massive attack against immigrants, and the other, the attempt to destroy our environment to further the interests of foreign millionaires.

In the northeast of the country, we gathered in front of Fortaleza, the governor's palace in Old San Juan, to demand that Governor Jeniffer González not comply with President Trump's directives to detain and deport immigrants. But despite the people's demands, anti-immigrant raids have increased. Federal agents go to the immigration offices where people legally process their residency permits and detain all the immigrants who were summoned that day. This is extremely outrageous and shameful.

The other massive demonstration was on the southwest tip of the island, where privatizers are developing a luxury residential project called Esencia, which includes an airport, schools, golf courses, million-dollar homes, and everything else the residents need so they do not have to leave this surreal enclave. It's a city within a city where foreign millionaires, who move to Puerto Rico to benefit from the odious laws that exempt them from paying taxes, can enjoy our tropical paradise without having to interact with the Puerto Rican people.

And to build this idyllic Escencia, they are altering the coastal terrain, destroying ecosystems and even archaeological structures of the Indigenous Taíno people, in addition to disrupting the region's scarce water sources.

But the people continue to organize and oppose these inhumane policies. There's nothing left but to fight to win.

From Puerto Rico, speaking to Radio Clarín of Colombia, Berta Joubert-Ceci

