

# Oscar López Rivera, a tireless Puerto Rican patriot

Jeiddy Martínez Armas

• SHORTLY before completing his term in office, former U.S. President Barack Obama commuted the sentence of Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera on January 17, 2017; following a strong international campaign for his release, according to **PL**.

López Rivera was born in San Sebastián, Puerto Rico in 1943, and at 14 years of age moved to the U.S. city of Chicago with his family. Later, he was drafted into the army to fight in the war against Vietnam for which he was awarded the Bronze Star, reports Puerto Rican newspaper, **El Nuevo Día**. In 1976 he joined the struggle for his country's independence, fighting hard to defend his compatriots' right to freedom and sovereignty as a member of the clandestine National Liberation Armed Forces.

In 1981 his activism saw him arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FIB) accused of "seditious conspiracy" against the U.S. govern-

ment in the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico.

Rivera declared himself a prisoner of war under the 1949 Geneva Convention, which recognizes the right to struggle against colonial occupation.

His petition was rejected by the U.S. government and he was sentenced to 55 years in prison on August 11, 1981, and sent to Leavenworth maximum security penitentiary, in the state of Kansas.

In the 1980s he was transferred to another prison in Illinois, after being convicted of planning to escape from Leavenworth, a conspiracy which Rivera stated was devised by the government. The conviction saw another 15 years added to his original sentence, according to **teleSUR**.

López Rivera was later offered clemency by former U.S. President William Clinton in 1999, which the activist declined, serving a total of 36 years before he was finally released on May 17, 2017.

Many global figures, such as Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, and Puerto Rican band Calle 13 and singer

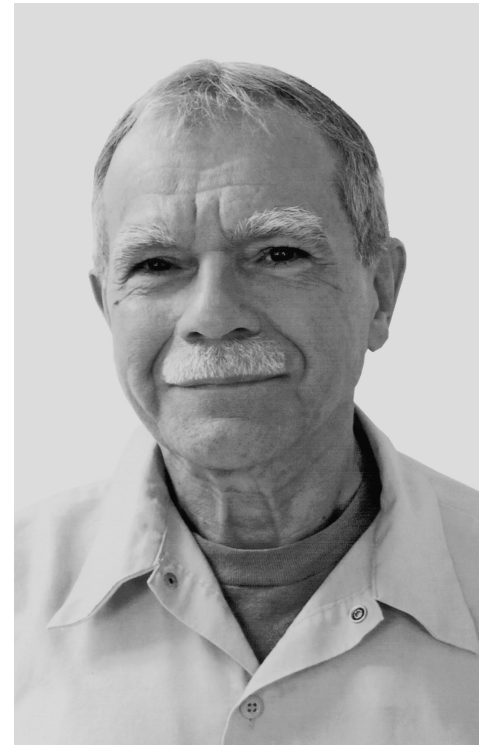
Andy Montañez, called for his release.

The Cuban government and people also supported efforts to free the anti-colonial activist. Fernando González LLort, decorated Hero of the Republic of Cuba and current President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), shared a cell with Oscar for a time, while they were both imprisoned, and led the campaign for the Puerto Rican activist's release after returning to Cuba.

López Rivera was moved from prison in February 2017 to serve the final months of his sentence under house arrest in San Juan, Puerto Rico, before being officially released on May 17, 2017.

In June of this year, López Rivera denounced the impact and legacy of colonialism on his country during a session by the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization.

The Puerto Rican activist is set to visit Cuba this November, in order to thank the Cuban people and government for their support in securing his release. •



*One airline, one country*

October 8, 1929  
Cubana de Aviación Curtiss S.A. established

Headquarters: Carretera Murgas No. 140 E/ Carretera Panamericana y Final. Reparto: El Wajay. Municipio de Boyeros. La Habana.  
Tél: (53-7) 834 4446 - 49  
www.cubana.cu

FRANK PAIS INTERNATIONAL ORTHOPEDIC SCIENTIFIC COMPLEX

**Director:**  
**Rodrigo Álvarez Cambras**

Ave. 51 No. 19603, La Lisa  
La Habana  
Cuba  
Tel: (537) 271 8646/ 271 9055/ 273 6480  
Fax: (537) 273 6480/ 273 1422/ 273 6444  
E-mail: cambras@fpais.sld.cu  
ccfpais@fpais.sld.cu  
www.frankpais-ortop.com  
www.ccortopfpais.sld.cu

The Frank País International Orthopedic Scientific Complex is the world's largest and most complete medical complex dedicated to orthopedic, traumatological and reconstructive surgery, and the rehabilitation of bone, muscle, nerve, and joint systems.

The complex offers treatment of spinal cord diseases; herniated discs; traumatic, congenital or acquired spinal paralysis; peripheral nerve paralysis; bone and soft tissue tumors; fractures and their aftermath; pseudoarthritis; bone and joint infections; and congenital and acquired limb deformities.

In addition, the complex performs reconstructive surgery of foot and hand lesions; partial or total bone and joint grafts; prosthetic joint replacement; microsurgery; arthroscopy; bone lengthening to remedy congenital or acquired conditions, shortness and dwarfism; revascularization surgery; and grafts in the case of spinal cord lesions and joint necrosis.

Special services are also offered in external fixator techniques and for sports lesions and trauma.

The complex includes the ORTOFORZA Physical Health and Sports Center, devoted to the promotion, recovery and maintenance of physical health through medical care, rehabilitation and sports in a comfortable facility with doctor's offices, a well-equipped gymnasium, squash and paddleball courts, swimming pool, mini-golf course, running track, as well as restaurant, coffee shop and other services.

Also included in the complex are the Ibero-American School of Orthopedics and Traumatology and the ORTOP Events Center, devoted, respectively, to the organization of courses and assistantships, and hosting of professional congresses and meetings. For such events, well-equipped meeting rooms and skilled technical staff are available.