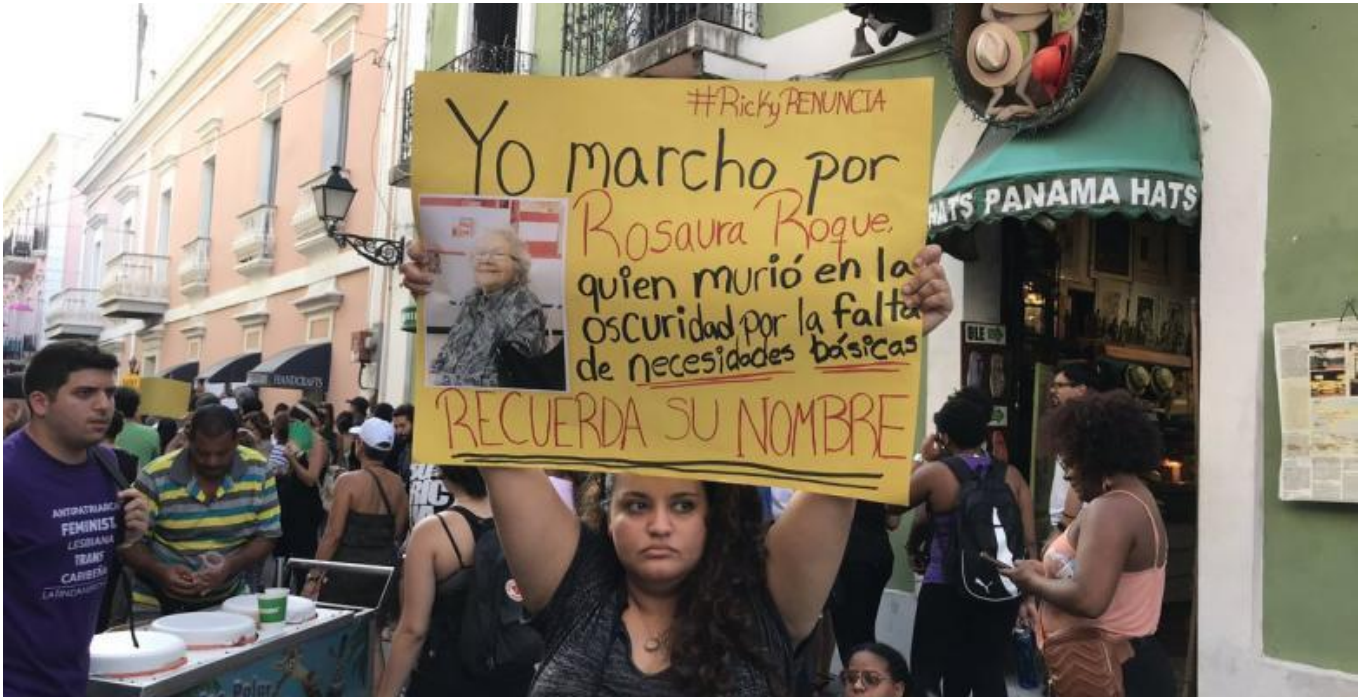

What goes on in Puerto Rico

By: Arnaldo Musa / Cubasi

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"What is going on in Puerto Rico?" Asked himself a heartbroken singer José Feliciano in one of his songs, without going deeper into the ups and downs of a population increasingly losing its nationality, transformed into a U.S. colony since 1898, now under the hypocritical status of Associate Free State.

Weak regimes before the empire, but tough while governing and sneaky in the continuous embezzlement of the public funds, have driven into debt the sister nation in more than 72,000 million USD (it is being said the actual figure is 120,000 million USD) and have neglected the restoration work of the havoc caused by nature as well as the caring for the population in the current Covid pandemic.

We still have in mind the recent images of thousands protesters who crowded the Old San Juan, the colonial city of the Puerto Rican capital city, where La Fortaleza is located, official residence of former governor Ricardo Rosselló. There was a young woman with a banner that read: *"I march on behalf of Rosaura Roque, who died in obscurity for lack of basic human needs. Remember her name."*

The mass protests paralyzed several sectors in the Puerto Rican capital city, but they did not have immediate relation with the death of Rosaura Roque, one of the nearly 3,000 people who died as a result of Hurricane María, which devastated this American colony in September 2017 and whose fallout still lingers while other tragedies emerge.

It has to do with the huge frustration accumulated before the inefficiency of the colonial governments like Rosselló's. This frustration hinted — unfortunately it did not come to fruition — to be the last straw that broke the camel's back.

This, despite being made public 889 pages of screenshots of a chat filled with vulgar language, homophobic and misogynist comments, mockeries and insults in the Telegram messaging between Rosselló and some of his closest aides, all men.

These chats could have been used as evidence of wrongdoings such as embezzlement of public funds, illegal gathering of information of members of the opposition, conspiracy, threats, discrimination, incitement to violence and undue enrichment, according to an indictment presented by the Puerto Rican Independence Party legislator Dennis Márquez before the House of Representatives of Puerto Rico.

Nothing worked, although Rosselló quitted nonetheless. The following governors have not been so outrageous, but they have not solved the major issues faced by the colony, abandoned—even more— by the previous administration of Donald Trump.

Even the always thriving companies exploiting Puerto Rico hesitate in covering the capital shortfall as they cannot maximize their profits.

This has happened in every privatization of services, where the investments' goals do not target social needs, but greater economic return.

And this is only a small sample of all the suffering of the population, which, unfortunately, do not mull the idea of the independence as they see it as an impossible, but they rather think about the way to make a living in present times. That is what goes on in Puerto Rico.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
