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## Obama Must Respond to Petition for Oscar Lopez' Freedom

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More than 104,000 people around the world have signed a petition addressed to US President Barack Obama in favor of the immediate release of Puerto Rican patriot Oscar López Rivera, surpassing the required figure of 100,000.

The petition is being made through the digital website 'We the People' and demands that the US president pardons Lopez Rivera, 73, who has spent more than 35 years in American prisons.

The 30-day deadline for collection of signatures closes on December 11th.

Oscar López Rivera is the oldest political prisoner in the world and was charged with seditious conspiracy, a crime for which US courts normally imposes a maximum sentence of 20 years, but the Puerto Rican independence fighter was sentenced to 55 years in prison.

According to his accusers, López Rivera was identified in 1981 as one of the leaders of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) group in Puerto Rico and was blamed for a bomb attack on the Fraunces Tavern in New York.

Later, in 1988, he received an additional sentence of 15 years for an alleged attempt to escape, bringing his total sentence to 70 years.

Of his 35 years of confinement, he has spent 12 in solitary confinement.

Now, Obama has an obligation to answer the petition, a claim that comes from many parts of the world, in favor of the freedom of the Puerto Rican patriot.