

Protests in major U.S. cities call for Puerto Rico's governor to resign



New York, July 16 (RHC)-- Puerto Rican organizations from the diaspora called for protests in the United States cities of New York, Washington D.C. and Orlando, Florida -- demanding the immediate resignation of the island's Governor, Ricardo Rossello, after a major report revealed on June 13st that he led a smear campaign against his opposition, using racist and misogynist remarks.

The first protest was organized by the Boricua Independence Front (Frente Independista Boricua) and took place Monday afternoon in the neighborhood of Union Square in New York. "We ask for the immediate resignation of Ricardo Rossello and his entire government for corruption and specifically, in the case of the governor, for being misogynist," said Rafael Agosto Miranda, spokesman for the left-wing Front, which aims at obtaining political independence for the nation.

Another demonstration is being held Tuesday in front of the offices of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA) in Washington D.C. by the Boricuas United in the Diaspora (Boricuas Unidos en la Diaspora), a group fighting for social change in Puerto Rico,

On Saturday, an 889-page document, published by the non-profit journalism group Center for Investigative Journalism, was released and revealed how the governor, along with other high-ranking officials manipulated public opinion about Rossello's administration through mass media, creating a "troll network" to discredit negative press coverage and criticism from opposition leaders.

The report also shows how the team sent messages through Telegram between late 2018 until January 20 of this year which included sexual, misogynistic and homophobic comments from Rossello and other members of the chat group. Journalists were also targeted, and Benjamin Torres Gotay from a widely-read newspaper on the island and lawyer John Mudd were both referred to as "cocksuckers," according to El Nuevo Dia.

The governor has been dismissing calls for his resignation that began earlier this week. Secretary of State Luis Rivera Marin put in his resignation Saturday evening, saying it was a "moral obligation."

Not only is the governor is accused of a smear campaign against the opposition, but Wednesday, a pair of his ex-senior administration officials were arrested and charged with fraud for abusing federal work contracts from the Department of Education and the Health Insurance Administration (ASES). According to reports, the three corruption cases amount to \$15.5 million in stolen state funds.

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