

Puerto Rican protesters demand ouster of Gov. Wanda Vázquez



San Juan, January 25 (RHC)-- In Puerto Rico, hundreds of people joined a protest outside the governor's mansion, demanding the ouster of Governor Wanda Vázquez. Public anger is rising after a video posted online last weekend showed undistributed emergency supplies meant for Hurricane Maria victims sitting unused in a warehouse in the city of Ponce.

Governor Vázquez is also under fire over her handling of the recent 6.4 magnitude earthquake, which killed one person and left thousands homeless.

This demonstration in front of the governor's residence was preceded in the afternoon by an impressive march that moved from the local Congress to the headquarters of the Executive branch.

"Down with Wanda," "To an abusive government, a combative people" and "Let them rot in jail" were some of the phrases that Puerto Ricans chanted while participating in the march, which was convened by singer Rene Perez (known as "Resident") and Saint Louis Cardinals baseball player, Yadier Molina.

The unjustified storage of humanitarian aid led Puerto Ricans to think that it was either a new corruption case or an expression of negligence.

"My grandchildren will not believe me when I tell them that, in less than 17 months, Puerto Rico faced two hurricanes, 1,800 tremors, an earthquake, and two governments that hid supplies," artist and journalist Reimillan said, as reported by La Izquierda Diario.

Governor Wanda Vazquez came to power last July after intense anti-government protests led to the resignation of former Governor Ricardo Rosello.

Carlos Acevedo, who was dismissed as commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Management (Nmead), said the governor, the secretary of state and the head of the National Guard if they knew about the existence of the warehouse with supplies.

After the latest intense seismic activity (Dec. 2019-Jan. 2020), the U.S. government signed a declaration of "major disaster status" in favor of Puerto Rico, which would thus access federal aid funds for municipalities such as Guanica, Guayanilla, Penuelas, Ponce, Utuado, and Yauco.

Vermont senator and 2020 presidential candidate Bernie Sanders tweeted a statement in solidarity with the protests, writing: "After a decade of austerity, hurricanes and earthquakes, Puerto Ricans have a right to a responsive government and full federal support to put an end to this crisis."

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