

Puerto Rican Governor Asks UN to Support Self-Determination



United Nations, June 22 (RHC)-- The United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization met on Monday to discuss arguments in favor of and against Puerto Rican sovereignty. The special committee approved a resolution in favor of Puerto Rican independence from the United States.

The Special Committee heard arguments from petitioners regarding the island's status as a self-governing, U.S.-controlled territory. During the hearing, Puerto Rico's Governor Alejandro García Padilla called on the United Nations to exert pressure on the United States to "respect" the will of the island's inhabitants.

García Padilla said: "Starting from the right of self-determination of the Puerto Rican people, I am to ask for the help of this organization to once again assert that equality and respect must exist in the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States based on the will of both peoples, and not one over the other."

The governor referred to Project 5278 passed in the House of Representatives, which would impose a federal board for fiscal control over the island, in exchange for possible restructuring of public debt. García Padilla he was "forced" to support the legislation, which goes to the U.S. Senate next week.

"To not deprive our citizens of basic services – in such essential areas such as health, safety and education – being a matter of life or death for many of my compatriots, I have been forced to support the said piece of legislation. I will not subject my country to misery," Garcia Padilla added. The governor also told the decolonization committee to "put the case of Puerto Rico to the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization and to the Human Rights Council."

While addressing U.N. officials on Monday, Garcia Padilla demanded U.S. authorities fulfill the promises it made to the U.N. in 1953, when it requested that Puerto Rico be removed from the organization's list of colonies.

The U.N. has issued 34 resolutions in favor of the island's decolonization since 1962.

The island has been controlled by the United States since the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, although Puerto Ricans are not granted full representation in the U.S. Congress and cannot vote for president, even though the position is the actual head of state for islanders.

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