



October 26, 2017

Hon. Philip Alston  
UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

***Re: Request to include Puerto Rico in official visit to the U.S.***

Honorable Rapporteur Alston:

The Human Rights Clinic of the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, School of Law, (hereinafter “Clinic”), the Caribbean Institute for Human Rights, Latino Justice (PRLDEF) and Amnesty International Puerto Rico, thank you for accepting our request about the inclusion of Puerto Rico in your upcoming official visit to the United States. Following up to previous conversations with your office, we are submitting information on the current situation in Puerto Rico, as well as a suggested agenda for your visit and the names and contacts of public officials and local organizations.

**A. Initial Considerations and Contextual Background**

In the recent month of September, Puerto Rico was brutally destroyed by hurricanes Irma and María. María in particular - the strongest storm in our history - left Puerto Rico totally devastated, with a general collapse of public services, including the complete failure of power, water and communication systems. Today, a month after the hurricane, 87% still live without electricity and many are now homeless or living in unsafe structures. Scarcity of food and safe drinking water is now a public health hazard in a territory where many hospitals are either closed or only partially open.

In addition to the humanitarian crisis, Puerto Rico has long suffered the economic consequences of its political relationship with the United States. Puerto Rico has no control over its economic development nor the ability to access international markets and financial institutions, engage in trade with regional partners, or even accept the docking of international ships due to federal limitations imposed by Congress through the Jones Act.

When hurricane María hit Puerto Rico the island was already experiencing an economic collapse with a public debt over \$73 billion dollars. Austerity measures adopted to address the financial crisis have had a serious impact on the lives of the Puerto Rican population, leading to increased

poverty and marginalization of the most vulnerable communities and generating more exclusion, inequality and discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, the crisis has been exacerbated by bureaucratic federal agencies that are not capable of providing urgent emergency relief to those who need it most. Emergency management practices to address the effects of hurricanes Irma and María – coordinated by federal agencies – have proven to be incompetent at best and discriminatory at worst in Puerto Rico and have demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of our humanitarian crisis. The consequences of our colonial status have proven devastating to the island's economic outlook and immediate prospects in responding to the devastation wreaked by the hurricanes.

## B. Austerity, Unemployment and Poverty in Puerto Rico

Most of the island lives at or near poverty and heavily depends on subsidized programs to survive. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2015 44% of Puerto Rico's population was already living below the federal poverty level,<sup>2</sup> a much higher rate than any state in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in 2014, the Census indicated that children are the most vulnerable of all Puerto Ricans, with 58% living below the federal poverty line.<sup>4</sup>

The economic inequality of the island is such that in 2012, the income of the richest ten percent was thirty-three times the income of the poorest ten percent, laying bare the tremendous wealth gap that exists on the island.<sup>5</sup> From 2000 – 2012, inequality increased not because the rich got richer, but because the poor got poorer.<sup>6</sup> Since 2006, the economy of Puerto Rico has lost a total of 207,000 jobs, which represents a cumulative decline of 16.6%.<sup>7</sup> According to the ECPR, in 2006 only 33% of the total population in Puerto Rico was employed, and in 2014 it was only 28%. According to the World Bank, in most countries this proportion exceeds 50%.

However, people who work are not exempt from suffering poverty on the island.<sup>8</sup> In Puerto Rico, one in five (1:5) people who work are poor according to the 2014 Community Survey analyzed

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<sup>1</sup> Several human rights organ have questioned the imposition of austerity measures and recognized the devastating impact it has on the island's ability to fulfill human rights obligations. See: UN Independent Expert on the effect of foreign debt on human rights, Declaration on Puerto Rico, Geneva, 9 January 2017. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21060&LangID=E>; See also: U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization, U.N. Doc. A/AC.109/2017/L.12. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/gacol3312.doc.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau, available at: [www.census.gov/quickfacts/PR](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/PR).

<sup>3</sup> CHILD TRENDS, LEFT BEHIND: POVERTY'S TOLL ON THE CHILDREN OF PUERTO RICO (March 28, 2016), Available at: [www.childrentrends.org/left-behind-poverty-toll-on-the-children-of-puerto-rico/](http://www.childrentrends.org/left-behind-poverty-toll-on-the-children-of-puerto-rico/)

<sup>4</sup> The above mentioned was of course, before hurricanes Irma and María caused an extreme devastation of our island. Today, Puerto Rico is at an economic vacuum, with most small and medium businesses closed and thousands without employment or any other source of income. Undoubtedly, today poverty and unemployment rates are higher than they were prior to the hurricanes.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

<sup>6</sup> Segarra, Eileen (2012). *What happened to the distribution of income in Puerto Rico during the last three decades of the XX Century? A statistical point of view*. Series de Ensayos y Monografías. Retrieved on: <http://economia.uprrp.edu/ensayo%20129.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Data obtained from the Fiscal Sustainability Act, Act 66 (June 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Muñiz Ortiz, *Aumentan los trabajadores pobres en Puerto Rico, según encuesta*, El Nuevo Dia (20 de septiembre de 2015),

by the Census Information Center (CIC) at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). Due to the proliferation of precarious part-time employment, this proportion doubled from 2000 to 2014.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the \$73 billion debt owed to private creditors has heavily bankrupted the island, as it owes more than it produces in gross domestic product (GDP). There is actually around \$35 billion that is produced in Puerto Rico annually by Puerto Rican workers at US-owned companies that leaves the island for the United States and is not re-invested in Puerto Rico aside from wages, which represents around 35 percent of Puerto Rico's GDP.

In response to the country's outstanding public debt, the government adopted austerity measures that proved devastating to the island's infrastructure, social and economic safety nets, and overall economic development. Moreover on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2016, the US Congress approved the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA), establishing a Financial Oversight and Management Board ("the Board"), charged with restructuring Puerto Rico's debt and with wide powers to approve fiscal policies. The Board imposed a fiscal plan<sup>10</sup> on Puerto Rico earlier this year, which includes further austerity measures such as cuts to public education (K – 12 and higher education), as well as cuts to healthcare and healthcare services, public employees and workers' rights, pensions of public employees and other government services.

The United Nations Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt on human rights, Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, have raised concerns over the adoption of more austerity measures in Puerto Rico, stressing their adverse effects on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by the population.<sup>11</sup>

Besides, the debt has long been called into question as immoral and illegal. The Commission on the Comprehensive Auditing of the Public Debt, a multi-sectorial commission created by the Puerto Rican legislature in 2015, and eliminated later in 2017, published preliminary reports on the municipal debt and debt of the Electric Authority (PREPA), noting that potentially half the debt, or nearly \$32 billion, was likely unlawful<sup>12</sup> per restrictions under the Puerto Rico Constitution. The legality and morality of the debt as "public" comes under question often, and is even argued under equitable remedies, such as odious debt, that principles of fairness in the realm of debt relief require an alternative solution that absolves the people of Puerto Rico from the burden of paying a debt that they argue isn't theirs, and that was accrued without their consent (and now without their ability to audit it).<sup>13</sup>

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<http://www.primerahora.com/noticias/puertorico/nota/aumentanlos trabajadores pobre en puerto rico segun encuesta-1109387/>.

<sup>9</sup> Id.

<sup>10</sup> The board's website is <http://juntasupervision.pr.gov/>, however since Hurricane Maria, the site has been down. All documents, letters and decisions of the board are generally available there.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21060&LangID=E>

<sup>12</sup> Puerto Rico Commission for the Comprehensive Audit of the Public Credit Pre-audit Survey Report, <http://sptpr.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Second-Interim-Pre-Audit-Report-on-2013-PREPA-debt-emission-con-anejos.pdf> and <http://periodismoinvestigativo.com/wp-content/uploads//2016/11/Interim-Report-Final-with-Exhibits-1.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan, *Puerto Rico's Odious Debt: The Economic Crisis of Colonialism*, 19 CUNY L. R. 287, <http://www.cunylawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Puerto-Ricos-Odious-Debt-The-Economic-Crisis-of-Colonialism.pdf>.

## **C. Migration and Forced Displacement to the US**

The economic crisis has produced the largest mass migration in the history of Puerto Rico, and as a result of the hurricanes, is on path to increase even further. Over 600,000 Puerto Ricans have had to leave the island to seek employment elsewhere since 2006. In 2015, official estimates indicated that due to Puerto Rico's financial strain, about 48,000 Puerto Ricans were migrating to the United States each year in search of better job opportunities, income and quality of life.<sup>14</sup> In the aftermath of Hurricane María, this trend is rapidly increasing; at only two weeks after the hurricane, over 27,000 had already moved to the state of Florida. Although there is still no official estimate including the total number of Puerto Ricans moving to other states in the US or even to other countries, the press have reported that such number could be near 100,000 in just one month.<sup>15</sup> At this rate, our island could see an even greater economic decline, with no income base to finance public services.

## **D. The Effect of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico and the Lack of an Effective Response**

The passage of Hurricane María on September 20, 2017, through Puerto Rico left unprecedented devastation and crippled the island and its infrastructure, as well as its already weakened economy. The hurricane has destroyed thousands of homes, cars, roads, offices and buildings and has left possibly hundreds dead.<sup>16</sup> Unmatched levels of flooding in 80 years damaged entire towns and communities, drowning homes and vehicles. Water levels reached over eight feet high where they stood, or became rivers running through town streets. Power lines were brought down all over the island, along with thousands and thousands of trees. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declared the eastern part of Puerto Rico a disaster zone on September 20, 2017, and the western part on October 2, 2017.<sup>17</sup> A curfew was installed by Governor Roselló that lasted several weeks to keep people off the streets in the evening where the dangerous interplay of floods, raw sewage, down electrical wires and absolute darkness took over.

### **1. Austerity, infrastructure and public services**

The austerity measures implemented under PROMESA meant that Puerto Rico could not prepare adequately for either Hurricane Irma.<sup>18</sup> The Electric Authority (AEE, or PREPA in English) had a needed approximately \$4 billion in repairs. After the hurricane, which devastated the power

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<sup>14</sup> *Los puertorriqueños abandonan en masa su país bajo la amenaza de “default”*, RT (21 de junio de 2015), <https://actualidad.rt.com/economia/178148-puertorriqueños-emigran-masivamente-eeuu>.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Luscombe, *Arrival of Puerto Ricans post –Hurricane María could have a big impact on Florida*, The Guardian (12 October 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Amulya Shankar, *Real death toll in Puerto Rico is probably 450 — much higher than official count*, USA Today (Oct. 18, 2017), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/10/18/real-death-toll-puerto-rico-probably-450-much-higher-than-official-count/774918001/>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4339>.

<sup>18</sup> Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan, *Puerto Rico’s Double Devastation: Hurricanes and Austerity* (Sept. 26, 2017), Huffington Post, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/puerto-ricos-double-devastation-hurricanes-and-austerity\\_us\\_59ca850fe4b0cdc7733531b0](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/puerto-ricos-double-devastation-hurricanes-and-austerity_us_59ca850fe4b0cdc7733531b0).

grid, Puerto Rico was knocked off the communications grid with a 100% blackout of the entire island.<sup>19</sup> As of October 20, 2017—exactly one month after Hurricane Maria’s landfall—87% of Puerto Rico remains without electricity. More than 100 bridges were damaged by Maria and 18 have been closed indefinitely, with new bridges collapsing or closing frequently.<sup>20</sup>

After filing the largest municipal bankruptcy in the history of the United States Damages to the economy and infrastructure have been estimated at up to nearly \$100 billion.<sup>21</sup> Yet no moratorium on debt repayment has been declared to tend to the massive humanitarian and human rights crisis facing the island. Puerto Rico was in no economic shape to pay for the debt prior to Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and now has absolutely no ability to pay for rebuilding its most basic infrastructure, like roads and electricity.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the government is scheduled to use up the rest of its remaining cash supply by October 31, 2017 and could possibly be left without money to pay for essential services and employees.

The tourism industry has been severely damaged if not temporarily destroyed, and there is no economic development plan to help the island rebuild and regain a tax base or income sources. The fiscal plan approved by the Financial Board remains in place, which includes deep austerity measures and cuts to public services. As a result of being unable to either provide maintenance to the power grid prior to the storm or rebuild it after, there are concerns that privatization of public services and agencies like PREPA will be forced through, leading to higher

## 2. Environmental and public health concerns and toxic exposure

The lack of access to water and drinking water has led to an island-wide crisis, including widespread concerns of possible public health disasters, and an outbreak of leptospirosis, (a bacterial disease caused by drinking water contaminated with urine from infected animals) has already occurred.<sup>23</sup> One month after the storm’s arrival, drinking water, or even treated water suitable for drinking, is unavailable in most municipalities. Thirty-five percent of the island’s population still lacks access to drinking water. Water bottles and filtration systems shipped in continue to be housed in the convention center in San Juan and are not making it to out the towns, particularly those further away from the San Juan metropolitan area. As a result, residents either continue to have no access to drinking water, or are drinking from contaminated sources,

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<sup>19</sup> Samantha Schmidt, Joel Achenbach and Sandhya Somashekhar, *Puerto Rico entirely without power as Hurricane Maria hammers island with devastating force*, Washington Post (Sept. 20, 2017), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/09/20/hurricane-maria-takes-aim-at-puerto-rico-with-force-not-seen-in-modern-history/>.

<sup>20</sup> Caitlin Dickerson, *Stranded by Maria, Puerto Ricans Get Creative to Survive*, New York Times (Oct. 16, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/us/hurricane-maria-puerto-rico-stranded.html>

<sup>21</sup> Jill Disis, *Hurricane Maria could be a \$95 billion storm for Puerto Rico*, CNN Money (Sept. 27, 2017), <http://money.cnn.com/2017/09/28/news/economy/puerto-rico-hurricane-maria-damage-estimate/index.html>; see also Ana Campoy, *How Hurricane Maria will be more costly for Puerto Rico than Harvey was for Texas In Puerto Rico*, Quartz (Sept. 27, 2017), <https://qz.com/1088762/puerto-rico-hurricane-marias-devastating-economic-cost/> (“Maria’s devastation has been multiplied by the island’s more limited ability to absorb it”).

<sup>22</sup> Carla Minet, Puerto Rico wasn’t ready for Hurricane Irma. We couldn’t possibly be., Washington Post (Sept. 7, 2017), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/09/07/puerto-rico-wasn-t-ready-for-hurricane-irma-we-couldnt-possibly-be/?utm\\_term=.ceee28d5c7a4](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/09/07/puerto-rico-wasn-t-ready-for-hurricane-irma-we-couldnt-possibly-be/?utm_term=.ceee28d5c7a4).

<sup>23</sup> Julia Belluz, *The unrelenting crisis in Puerto Rico is forcing people to drink dirty water*, Vice (Oct. 18, 2017), <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/10/18/16489180/water-crisis-puerto-rico-hurricane-maria>.

including water contaminated with sewage or well water from Superfund sites.<sup>24</sup> Water sources, including rivers and wells, are now contaminated with livestock waste, human sewage, chemicals and other contaminants. Water from the Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados, or AAA), was pumping water from a well at the Dorado Groundwater Contamination Site, which was listed last year as a Superfund site.<sup>25</sup> Possible lead contamination in the waters that flooded the Battery Recycling Company, also designated a Superfund site, continue to be a concern to nearby residents of Arecibo.<sup>26</sup> However, given the fact that residents cannot access ANY water, potable water or otherwise, they are risking exposure to contaminants and disease, and possibly worse. As one resident said, “If I don’t drink water I’m going to die. So I might as well drink this water.”<sup>27</sup>

Public health officials are deeply concerned about the lack of attention and aid given to Puerto Rico and the resulting diseases that are both air-borne and water-based that are arising from unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Raw sewage and lack of trash removal continues to expose residents to unsafe bacteria. The lack of electricity has meant most households that do not have a generator lost the ability to pump water into homes so residents can bathe and flush toilets. Homes with broken pipes and human waste pileup are having their pipes re-flooded during rains, causing human waste to overflow from toilets and bathtubs. Trash pileup on streets continues to grow, and with rain, the raw sewage is being washed into the streets and even back into nearby water sources.<sup>28</sup> The President of the Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (AAA) has said that only 17 backup generators had been installed of the 150 he requested from FEMA 20 days after the storm, despite Trump’s statement that “Puerto Rico now has more generators, I believe, than any place in the world. There are generators all over the place.”<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, hundreds of people have died since the hurricane, including from lack of access to food, water, medicines and from heat exposure. Some have had to travel outside of the country for medical attention or to be treated. Hospital wings and services closed prior to the hurricanes as a result of the austerity measures imposed from the fiscal plan that the federal fiscal control board insisted on under PROMESA, leaving far less services available in the face of a health crisis. Hospitals have had to evacuate patients due to lack of diesel to run their generators, leading to a 25% decrease in the number of treatments for dialysis patients.<sup>30</sup> Medicine is low and yet more patients are arriving due to the illnesses since the storm. The U.S. Navy sent a naval medical ship, the Comfort, but it remains unclear how many patients they’re actually seeing. “The Puerto Rico Department of Health has sent just 82 patients to the Comfort over the

<sup>24</sup> Vann R. Newkirk II, *Puerto Rico's Environmental Catastrophe*, The Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/10/an-unsustainable-island/543207/>.

<sup>25</sup> John Sutter, *Desperate Puerto Ricans are drinking water from a hazardous-waste site*, CNN (Oct. 14, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/13/us/puerto-rico-superfund-water/index.html>.

<sup>26</sup> See *Puerto Rico's Environmental Catastrophe*, *supra* note 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Puerto Ricans Face Major Health Threat from Drinking Contaminated 'Superfund' Site Water, EPA Says*, Weather Channel (Oct. 18, 2017), <https://weather.com/news/news/2017-10-18-puerto-rico-drinking-water-health-threat-superfund-site-contamination-epa>.

<sup>28</sup> Testimony from resident in Vieques who noted that with the rain, sewage was overflowing into nearby residential neighborhoods and into the streets, until it reached the bay where it flew into the ocean.

<sup>29</sup> Armando Valdés Prieto, *Trump can't stop complaining about Puerto Rico. And it shows in his policies.*, Washington Post (Oct. 19, 2017), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/10/19/trump-can-t-stop-complaining-about-puerto-rico-and-it-shows-in-his-policies/?utm\\_term=.55e5bdd20f88](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/10/19/trump-can-t-stop-complaining-about-puerto-rico-and-it-shows-in-his-policies/?utm_term=.55e5bdd20f88).

<sup>30</sup> Frances Robles, *Puerto Rico's Health Care Is in Dire Condition, Three Weeks After Maria*, New York Times (Oct. 10, 2017), [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/10/us/puerto-rico-power-hospitals.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/10/us/puerto-rico-power-hospitals.html?_r=0).

past six days, even though the ship can serve 250. The Comfort's 800 medical personnel were treating just seven patients on Monday.”<sup>31</sup>

In terms of environmental consequences due to the storm, Puerto Rico’s environmental hazards and exposure to contaminants have only intensified. In Vieques, residents continue to wonder what precautions were took by the United States Navy and Environmental Protection Agency to protect them against additional exposure to toxic military waste as part of the Superfund site cleanup, and are still awaiting a response. In the southern town of Peñuelas where toxic carbon ash is brought by a US company and disposed of in nearby Guayama, residents have not heard about what steps were taken to ensure they are not risking further exposure to the ash, which has already caused an increase in serious illnesses in the nearby area, including cancer.

### 3. Lack of adequate response by the federal government

The response to this unparalleled humanitarian disaster in Puerto Rico by the federal government has been atrocious, including belittling the lives of Puerto Ricans who died after Maria by President Trump to a “real” disaster in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and throwing paper towels to an audience of Puerto Ricans when they are facing critical lack of food, water, medicine and power. Prior to deciding to travel to Puerto Rico two weeks after Maria hit, Trump tweeted that Puerto Rico owed “billions of dollars to Wall Street, which sadly must be dealt with.” A week after his 4-hour visit to Puerto Rico, Trump tweeted that the financial crisis was “largely of their [Puerto Ricans] own making. He stated that the humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico as a result of the hurricane “threw the [federal] budget a little out of whack.” In that same day, he tweeted that FEMA and first responders would soon need to be pulled out of Puerto Rico, without signaling the same time of concern over their stay in other hurricane-affected areas after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, such as in Florida or Texas. He also stated that he did not believe that military personnel deployed to assist Puerto Rico should be involved in the delivery of food and water.<sup>32</sup> The Mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz, said that Trump has “condemn[ed Puerto Ricans to] a slow death of non-drinkable water, lack of food, lack of medicine while you keep others eager to help from reaching us since they face the impediment of the Jones Act.”<sup>33</sup>

FEMA has been heavily criticized for their lack of adequate preparation, attention and assistance in Puerto Rico. The agency arrived () after the hurricane hit the island, however most of their personnel did not speak Spanish. Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking island where Spanish is the first and often only language of the residents. Aid has been slow to arrive to the island, and even slower to get distributed. When questioned about the inefficient delivery of aid, President Trump stated “It’s a big ocean, it’s a very big ocean. And we’re doing a really good job,” repeating that sentiment later by stating, “this is a thing called the Atlantic Ocean. This is tough stuff.” The Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security, where FEMA is housed, stated that news of FEMA’s arrival was a “good news story,” which was disputed by Carmen Yulin Cruz, Mayor of

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<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> Sean Breslin, *Trump Says Military Distributing Supplies in Puerto Rico Is 'Something ... They Shouldn't Have to Be Doing'*, The Weather Channel (Oct. 16, 2017), <https://weather.com/news/news/2017-10-17-trump-comments-puerto-rico-recovery-hurricane-maria-military>.

<sup>33</sup> Jeff Stein, “WE WILL DIE”: San Juan mayor sends extraordinary plea to President Trump, Vox (Oct. 12, 2017), <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/10/12/16465226/puerto-rico-trump-san-juan>.

San Juan, Cruz, explaining that people in Puerto Rico were dying from lack of an effective emergency response.<sup>34</sup>

FEMA has yet to authorize full reconstruction aid to Puerto Rico, despite having been requested it two weeks after the hurricane.<sup>35</sup> President Trump tweeted on October 12, 2017 that FEMA and first responder personnel would soon need to be withdrawn from the island. Just days before, the Army General in charge of military assistance noted that the Defense Department had not sent enough troops or vehicles and would need to request more.<sup>36</sup>

FEMA has the ability and mandate to assist with infrastructure rebuilding, as they assisted with in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina when \$9.9 billion in infrastructure funds were spent. However, they have been practically absent from any real attempts to rebuild infrastructure on the island. FEMA actually deleted statistics from its website regarding the number of residents and buildings that had power restored (perhaps due to the high number of people still without electricity weeks after Maria landed), yet was forced to post them again after widespread uproar.<sup>37</sup>

FEMA has not provided sufficient relief to provide food or meals to people,<sup>38</sup> and even stated that their responsibility is not to provide water and food to people.<sup>39</sup> “FEMA has only provided 6.2 million gallons of bottled and bulk water since Hurricane Maria hit on Sept. 20 — including water delivered to hospitals and dialysis centers. That covers only 9 percent of the commonwealth's current drinking water needs.”<sup>40</sup>

Promises of relief aid have been few and far between, and demands by local government officials, including town mayors struggling to find food and water for their residents, fall on deaf ears. Mayor Cruz said that the federal government’s lack of response to the cries by mayors in Puerto Rico from all 78 municipalities has meant they are “killing us with the inefficiency.” In fact, Mayor Cruz’ unsuccessfully requested help from FEMA after the power failed at a major

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<sup>34</sup> Errin Haines Whack, ‘As If Puerto Rico Did Not Exist.’ *Hurricane Maria Is a Reminder of ‘Second-Class’ Status for Some*, Time (Sep 30, 2017), <http://time.com/4964280/hurricane-maria-puerto-rico-second-class-status/>.

<sup>35</sup> Alexia Fernández Campbell, *FEMA has yet to authorize full disaster help for Puerto Rico*, VOX (Oct 16, 2017), <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/10/3/16400510/fema-puerto-rico-hurricane> (“Restoring power, communications, and running water isn’t the kind of work that emergency responders can do. Puerto Rico needs utility crews and government contractors from the US mainland. So far, that’s not happening, and it won’t until FEMA authorizes the C-G categories.”).

<sup>36</sup> Ellen Mitchell, ‘Not enough’ troops, equipment in Puerto Rico, says general in charge of relief, The Hill (Sept. 29, 2017), <http://thehill.com/policy/defense/353137-not-enough-troops-equipment-in-puerto-rico-says-general-in-charge-of-relief>.

<sup>37</sup> Josh Delk, *FEMA restores deleted Puerto Rico stats after uproar*, The Hill (10/06/17), <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/354290-fema-restores-deleted-puerto-rico-stats-after-uproar>.

<sup>38</sup> Mahita Gajanan, ‘The American Government Has Failed.’ *Celebrity Chef José Andrés Slams FEMA’s Puerto Rico Response*, Time (Oct 16, 2017), <http://time.com/4981655/jose-andres-fema-trump-puerto-rico/>.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow/watch/d-block-puerto-rico-1067297859792>.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew Rozsa, Puerto Rico’s governor begs: “We need equal treatment” from FEMA, Salon (Oct. 19, 2017), <https://www.salon.com/2017/10/19/puerto-ricos-governor-begs-we-need-equal-treatment-from-fema/>.

hospital, and the Director of FEMA, William “Brock” Long, dismissed her requests and critiques of the agency by saying, “we filtered out the mayor a long time ago.”<sup>41</sup>

A 10-day waiver of the Jones Act,<sup>42</sup> a law that requires that only U.S. flagged ships be allowed to dock in Puerto Rico (including to deliver food and supplies), was granted by President Trump after tremendous pressure and after initially denying the request by members of Congress. However, given that many ships and groups were not able to organize in time once granted, very few ships were able to take advantage of such a short period of time. Groups have requested that either a year waiver be granted or a full repeal of the Jones Act.

#### 4. Discriminatory treatment

The discriminatory treatment of Puerto Rico by the federal government compared to other territories and states is reflective of the political, or colonial, relationship that Puerto Rico has with the United States. Puerto Rico has not only received less funds than other recent disaster zones, such as Texas and Florida, it has received ill-equipped FEMA personnel who have proven to be obstructionist in providing relief and ensuring it reaches residents. FEMA has only deployed 1,700 personnel to Puerto Rico (and the U.S. Virgin Islands) compared with nearly 2,600 personnel who were sent to the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. After over one month since the passage of Hurricane Maria, the convention center in San Juan remains stocked with supplies that have been shipped and sent, including of vital supplies like water and food, while thousands if not millions remain on the brink of a public health crisis and continue to live in a humanitarian crisis. Governor Roselló recently demanded equal treatment from FEMA with regards to their relief efforts.<sup>43</sup>

The former director of Puerto Rico's Office of Management and Budget noted:

President Trump’s approach to Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria has been coherently inhumane. He has called some Puerto Rican leaders “politically motivated ingrates,” made insensitive references to how much federal money is being spent on recovery, refused to support equitable health-care access for the island’s 3.5 million U.S. citizens, bemoaned on Twitter how federal personnel could not be in the commonwealth after the hurricane “forever” and this week complained from the Rose Garden that the military is distributing food, “something that really they shouldn’t have to be doing.”<sup>44</sup>

President Trump is not inclined to help Puerto Rico and has repeatedly pointed to the fiscal crisis on the island as the root of the problem, a crisis which he believes Puerto Ricans are solely

<sup>41</sup> Laura King, *Mayor of Puerto Rico’s capital who was previously singled out by Trump comes under new criticism from FEMA head*, Los Angeles Times (Oct. 8, 2017), <http://www.latimes.com/politics/washington/la-na-pol-essential-washington-updates-fema-head-calls-san-juan-mayor-s-1507472050-htmlstory.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Nelson Denis, *The Jones Act: The Law Strangling Puerto Rico*, New York Times (Sept. 25, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/opinion/hurricane-puerto-rico-jones-act.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Matthew Rozsa, *Puerto Rico’s governor begs: “We need equal treatment” from FEMA*, Salon (Oct. 19, 2017), <https://www.salon.com/2017/10/19/puerto-ricos-governor-begs-we-need-equal-treatment-from-fema/>.

<sup>44</sup> Armando Valdés Prieto, *Trump can’t stop complaining about Puerto Rico. And it shows in his policies.*, Washington Post (Oct. 19, 2017), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/10/19/trump-can-t-stop-complaining-about-puerto-rico-and-it-shows-in-his-policies/?utm\\_term=.55e5bdd20f88](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/10/19/trump-can-t-stop-complaining-about-puerto-rico-and-it-shows-in-his-policies/?utm_term=.55e5bdd20f88).

responsible for, and has painted Puerto Ricans as lazy people who want the government to do everything.<sup>45</sup> In response to the official death toll during his visit to Puerto Rico (at that time the official number was 16 deaths), President Trump compared the number of deaths in Puerto Rico to the number of deaths after Hurricane Katrina, telling the public and nearby officials, “sixteen people, verified; 16 versus in the thousands. You can be very proud all of your people, all of our people, 16 versus literally thousands of people, you can be very proud.”

Lastly, the calls for the United States to pay attention to Puerto Rico and its residents cannot be based on citizenship or nationality. The citizenship that was imposed on Puerto Ricans in 1917 is not the source of the United States’ obligation, rather as the nation responsible for administering its colonial territories, it has a responsibility to respect, protect and fulfill human rights, including in times of economic and climate crisis.

## **E. Conclusion and Request**

The situation in our country is urgent and in many aspects unique. The fiscal policies adopted by the government of the United States and Puerto Rico have taken place without due regard to the international human rights legal framework, generating overwhelming inequality and limiting the most basic freedoms of our people. The disastrous collusion of austerity, colonialism, unaccountable and imposed forms of government with the humanitarian crisis caused by the hurricanes provoking the total and complete collapse of our crippled infrastructure, leaving millions of Puerto Ricans without help, without international aid and without recourse to seek justice and a dignified response.

We are grateful that you have decided to include Puerto Rico in your visit because otherwise the atrocities being committed that are indebting generations and condemning them to lifetimes of poverty will occur unnoticed by the international community.

### **1. Proposed visit schedule**

We would like to suggest an agenda for your three (3) day visit to Puerto Rico, which is detailed in Addendum 1 below. In summary, the visit would include:

- Visits to affected communities in the municipalities of San Juan, Vieques, Salinas, Loíza and Comerío;
- Meeting with critical civil society groups working in the most vulnerable and poor communities, as well as working on issues such as healthcare, housing, education, labor and employment, LGBTTI communities, gender equality, and broader access to justice issues;
- Meetings with public officials, including Mayor of San Juan, as well as with members of the Financial Oversight and Management Board;
- Meeting with the new Citizen’s Commission on Auditing of Public Debt;

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<sup>45</sup> Tweet from Donald Trump on Sept. 30, 2017.

We appreciate the attention given to our request. Should you have any questions concerning our request or logistics involved in planning a visit to the island and meeting with civil society groups, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Best,



Annette M. Martínez Orabona

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Instituto Caribeño de Derechos Humanos (ICADH)  
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# Logistics for visit to Puerto Rico

Philip Alston,  
UN Special Rapporteur on  
extreme poverty and human  
rights

## **I. Transportation**

- Travel arrangements to San Juan

In order to travel to Puerto Rico, arrangements should be made to arrive at Luis Muñoz Marín Airport (SJU) is the main airport in Puerto Rico. All major airlines travel to SJU: JetBlue, AA, Delta, United Airlines

- Local transportation

Uber and Taxi services are available in Puerto Rico. Some tourist areas are exclusively covered by Taxis (like the airport). There are also several private transportation companies operating in San Juan.

## **II. Communications**

All main cel phone companies are operating in Puerto Rico with intermitent internet service at the moment. However, due to damages on there are very few areas where cell phones are fully functional.

## **III. Suggested Agenda**

A three day visit to Puerto Rico should ideally include:

- Visit communities living in extreme poverty, such as the Caño Martin Peña in San Juan, Loíza, Comerío, Utuado and the municipality of Vieques;
- Meeting with critical civil society groups working in the most vulnerable and poor communities, as well as working on issues such as healthcare, housing, education, labor and employment, LGBTTI communities, gender equality, and broader access to justice issues;
- Meeting with public officials and with members of the federal fiscal control board and creditors in the island;
- Meeting with the new Citizen's Commission on the Integral Audit of the Public Debt.

### **A. Visit to Affected Communities**

The rapporteur's official visit should include in site visit to affected communities. Ideally, he should be able to assess communities in the metropolitan area, but also in the areas most affected by the hurricanes Irma and María, located in the central and montanious part of the island and in the island municipality of Vieques. In the northern region, communities located near the

coastline were greatly affected, including residents of the Caño Martín Peña (in San Juan) and in Loíza. There are also several communities that were severely affected in the central, montanous part of the island, specifically in Utuado, Adjuntas, Jayuya and Comerío. Access to some of areas in these municipalities is still a challenge, but the main streets are open. Of these, we suggest a visit to Comerío, which has many affected communities, and is not as difficult to transit as other parts in the region.

There are several local organizations that may help organize a visit to these communities. Following you will find a list of communities that were severely affected by the hurricane and contact information of local, grassroots organizations that are working with them in their recovery efforts.

- **CAÑO MARTÍN PEÑA (SAN JUAN)**



The residents of the Caño Martín Peña, a community located at just 15 minutes from San Juan airport, live in a flooding-prone area under vulnerable housing constructions, which were partly or completely damaged by hurricanes Irma and María.

*Hurricane Maria caused extensive flooding in the area, and the black water [...] was the product of heavy rains mixed with the overwhelmed channel, which has*

*been polluted with raw sewage and garbage for decades. The toxic mix was several feet deep in places but quickly receded. Now, two weeks later, parts of the neighborhood still have the occasional, overwhelming smell of an open sewer.<sup>46</sup>*

The **Proyecto Enlace del Caño Martín Peña**, is an awarded community organization working with residents in the rebuilding efforts. This organization is well established in the community and could help arrange a visit to the area.

WEB: <http://cano3punto7.org/nuevo/index.html>

Contact: **Lyvia Hernandez**

• **LOÍZA**

Loíza is located in the northern coast at approximately 40 minutes by car from the San Juan Airport. Residents of Loíza have been historically discriminated against. It is a predominantly black and poor community, in fact Loíza is one of the poorest municipalities in Puerto Rico. Its residents fought for decades against private sand extraction industries that increased erosion and left the community more vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters. Hurricane María had massive effects in Loíza, destroying 3,000 homes and leaving many without a secure place to live, due to damage caused by massive flooding.



<sup>46</sup> AJ Vicens, *Puerto Rico's Poorest Communities Are Doing the Rebuilding the Trump Administration Won't*, Mother Jones, October 5, 2017. Available at: <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/10/puerto-ricos-poorest-communities-are-doing-the-rebuilding-the-trump-administration-wont/>

**Taller Salud** is a non-for-profit grass roots organization in Loíza. It is a well known and respected organization, focused on the rights to health and particularly, the rights of women. They are available to help organize a visit to Loíza.

WEB: <http://www.tallersalud.com/>

Contact: **Tania Rosario** [REDACTED]

Contact: **Lourdes Inoa** [REDACTED]

Address: Carretera 187 km. 7.0 Sector Tocones  
Barrio Medianía Alta, Loiza, 00722

- **COMERÍO**

Comerío is located in the central part of the main island (about 1.25 hours from San Juan) and its population is around 20,000. Hurricane María had devastating effects in Comerío, destroying completely its water supply system and forcing residents to collect water from local rivers and creeks. Today, Comerío is still without electricity and a working water sewage system. According to official estimates, around 1,500 houses were damaged beyond repair. The massive quantity of rain fall caused historic flooding levels, up to seven feet in some areas.



**Casa Juana Colón** is a community center located in the heart of Comerío. This non-for-profit organization works with women and girls, defending their rights and providing tools for their empowerment and development. Casa Juana Colón is active in the recovery efforts, coordinating help and delivering aid to families in need.

WEB: <https://www.facebook.com/CASA-JUANA-COL%C3%93N-778119355534577/>

Contact: Janice Solivan Roig  
[REDACTED]

Address: Sector El Cielito (al lado de la Escuela de Bellas Artes de Comerío).

- **SALINAS**

Salinas is one of the poorest municipalities in Puerto Rico with over 60% of its population living under the poverty line and is located in the southern coast line, at about 1.30 hours from San Juan. The region of Salinas and the southeast has been known in Puerto Rico as the “hunger route.”

We strongly recommend a visit to the communities of Las Mareas and Playita which are two of the poorest regions in Salinas, but also serve as a clear cut example of environmental justice concerns, as the area has suffered from the contamination produced by two fossil-fuel generation plants -one of which burns coal and stores coal combustion derivates on site-, several GMO-producing companies, which consume a great deal of water from the Southern Aquifer. (See: <https://www.youcaring.com/comitedialogoambientalycoquisolar-739871>)



**Comité Diálogo Ambiental** is a community environmental group composed of residents of the municipalities of Salinas and Guayama. This organization promotes the general welfare of the communities it serves through education and capacity building to promote environmental protection and economic development.

Contact: **Ruth Santiago**



**IDEBAJO (Iniciativa de ecodesarrollo de Bahía de Jobos)**, brings together community groups and fishing associations and other organizations in the Bahía de Jobos area.

WEB: <https://www.facebook.com/idebajo.idebajo/>

Contact: Roberto Thomas



- **VIEQUES**

Vieques is an island municipality, located off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico. It has a population of about 9,000, and between 43 - 72% of them live under the federal poverty line.<sup>47</sup> The residents of Vieques have suffered illnesses caused by heavy chemical pollutants left by the US Navy, which used this small island as a bombing range and site for military training for over 60 years. The high levels of contamination and military waste near a close civilian population led Vieques to be declared a Superfund site, meaning a site that presents serious health and environmental hazard risks to the population and land. The lack of basic services, such as access to affordable, quality healthcare, means that the majority of residents must take a ferry to the main island of Puerto Rico, which usually entails a full day of travel and travel costs in order to receive medical attention. This is particularly burdensome for residents of Vieques who suffer from serious or terminal illnesses, such as cancer, hypertension, diabetes and cirrosis (which are disproportionately high in Vieques as a result of the Navy's military practices).

The island of Vieques, at just seven miles from Puerto Rico, was completely destroyed by Hurricanes Irma and María. It is unclear what steps were taken by the federal agencies responsible for administering the Superfund site, namely the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Navy, to protect the population against additional exposure to contaminants in the face of both Hurricanes Irma and Maria. In addition, the primary economic driver, which is tourism, was devastated after the hurricanes, leaving most hotels or guest houses closed or destroyed. Even fisherman have been unable to resume work. Whereas parts of Puerto Rico have improved communications since Hurricane Maria, Vieques remains overwhelmingly

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<sup>47</sup> <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/vieques-vm-pr/j>. Local leaders have said it is as high as 72%.

without communications (including phone or internet), in addition to having no electricity or water in many parts. The heavy rains post-hurricane during the week of Oct. 17, 2017, meant that parts of Vieques where trash had not been picked up for weeks was washed onto the street and down to the bay in the neighborhood of Esperanza, causing great exposure to health hazards for local residents who had to traverse streets with raw sewage flowing through them.

We recommend a visit to Vieques island as necessary to understand the complete lack of governmental attention to these communities.

**Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses**

Contact: Zaida Torres  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Incubadora de Microempresas Viequenses**

Contact: Nilda Medina  
[REDACTED]



## **B. Meeting and Dialogue with Civil Society**

There are many organizations, and institutions that are committed to the defense of human rights in Puerto Rico. Most of these organizations are engaged in recovery efforts and have been working non-stop to help local communities get back on their feet. They are interested in having a moment to talk with the Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, and provide a response to the information that the government may have.

The International Human Rights Clinic of the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, School of Law, offers its facilities and support to coordinate the meeting. The following are just some of the active organizations in Puerto Rico.

Nombre Organización	Contact	Email:
**		

## **C. Meetings with government officials: Visit to the Convention Center of Puerto Rico (15 min. from the San Juan Airport)**

The Convention Center of Puerto Rico, became the heart of the operation for the country's recovery, the Center for Emergency Operations (COE spanish acronym) unites over a hundred state and federal government agencies, as well as more than 50 local and international media groups. While the COE works on the second floor, the third one has centralized the work of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) responsible of responding to requests and complaints from citizens, municipalities and the state government.

The facilities also locates the "Joint Center" of the state government that facilitates the coordination of the efforts that answer the national emergency. This place, also, receives some of the donations and supplies of water and food that arrive to the Island.

Objectives:

Meet relevant government officials:

- Governor of Puerto Rico - Hon. Ricardo Rosselló-Nevares
- Luis Gerardo Rivera Marín – Secretary, Dept. of State
- Rafael Rodríguez Mercado – Secretary, Dept. of Health
- Wanda Vázquez- Secretary, Dept. of Justice
- Héctor Pesquera – Secretary, Dept. of Security
- Carmen Yulin – Mayor of San Juan

Office	Person	Contact	Web
Governor of Puerto Rico	Hon. Ricardo Rosselló-Nevares	(787) 721-7000	<a href="http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/">http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/</a>
Secretary of State	Hon. Luis Gerardo Rivera Marín	(787) 722-2121	<a href="http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/">http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/</a>
Secretary of Health	Hon. Rafael Rodríguez Mercado	787-765-2929 contactus@salud.pr.gov	<a href="http://www.salud.gov.pr/Pages/Home.aspx">http://www.salud.gov.pr/Pages/Home.aspx</a>
Secretary, Dept. of Justice	Hon. Wanda Vázquez	787)721-2900	<a href="http://www.justicia.pr.gov/">http://www.justicia.pr.gov/</a>
Secretary, Dept. of Public Security	Hon. Héctor Pesquera	hmpesquera@dsp.pr.gov	
Mayor of San Juan	Hon. Carmen Yulín Cruz Soto	787-480-2500	<a href="http://sanjuanciudadpatria.com/">http://sanjuanciudadpatria.com/</a>
Agencia Estatal para el Manejo de Emergencias y Administración de Desastres (AEMEAD)		(787) 724-0124	<a href="http://www.aemead.pr.gov/">http://www.aemead.pr.gov/</a>

- Meeting with relevant federal officials: FEMA representative & US Department of Defense

Agency	Contact	Web	
FEMA region II	<a href="mailto:FEMA-R2-ExternalAffairs@fema.dhs.gov">FEMA-R2-ExternalAffairs@fema.dhs.gov</a>	<a href="https://www.fema.gov/region-ii-nj-ny-pr-vi-0">https://www.fema.gov/region-ii-nj-ny-pr-vi-0</a>	
US Department of Defense	<a href="https://www.army.mil/contact/">https://www.army.mil/contact/</a>	<a href="https://www.defense.gov/">https://www.defense.gov/</a>	<a href="https://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/DoD-Hurricane-Relief/">https://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/DoD-Hurricane-Relief/</a>

#### D. Meetings with Members of the Fiscal Control Board

In June 2016, the US Congress imposed a Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico. The seven-member Board has the power to approve Puerto Rico's general budget and makes all final determinations on financial policies. Early this year, the UN Special Rapporteur on the effects of foreign debt on human rights, Hon. Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, expressed his concerns over the Board and its prioritization of debt payment over human rights.<sup>48</sup>

Web: <https://juntasupervision.pr.gov/index.php/es/contact-and-press/>

Press Contact: José Luis Cedeño

Email: [jcedeno@forculuspr.com](mailto:jcedeno@forculuspr.com)

Tel. (787) 400-9245

Office. (787) 641-0001

<sup>48</sup> Puerto Rico's debt crisis: UN expert warns human rights cannot be side-lined by Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt on human rights. Geneva, 9 January, 2017. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21060&LangID=E>

**E. Meeting with the Citizen's Commission on the Integral Audit of the Public Debt  
(Comisión Ciudadana por la Auditoría Integral de la Deuda Pública)**

Two preliminary audits conducted by an independent Commission of experts mandated by law showed that at least part of the debt was acquired through dubious and illegal transactions or even fraud. This Commission was eliminated by the new administration.

In response, a citizen's driven organization called Frente Ciudadano por la Auditoría Integral de la Deuda (Frente), started a multisectorial effort to demand a thorough audit of the public debt. The Frente then established a new Citizen's Commission for the integral audit of the debt. This Commission is not associated with the government, and is comprised of well respected individuals and members of the academia.

We suggest the Rapporteur should get in contact with the Citizen's Commission to discuss the different actions taken by the Fiscal Financial Board.

Web: <http://www.auditoriayapr.org/somos/>

Contact: Eva Prados, Coordinator

Email: [REDACTED]

## Annex II

The following are additional resources that speak directly to the devolving political and economic crisis in Puerto Rico, including the relationship between creditors/investors and members of the federal fiscal control board, ethically questionable or unlawful practices by hedge fund investors in indebting Puerto Rico, and objections based on economic outlook and good governance and economic practices to the fiscal plan (insisted upon and approved by the Federal Financial Oversight and Management Board).

They are listed in chronological order and are included in website format so as not to overwhelm our submission with large files.

1. Center for a New Economy, *The Case for Comprehensive Disaster Relief* (October 20, 2017), available at <http://grupocne.org/2017/10/20/the-case-for-comprehensive-disaster-relief/>.
2. HedgeClippers, *Partner Paper No. 5: The Looting of Puerto Rico's Infrastructure Fund: Carlos M. Garcia's destructive fiscal policies hurt Puerto Rico once, could it happen again?* (May 16, 2017), available at <http://hedgeclippers.org/partner-paper-no-5-the-looting-of-puerto-ricos-infrastructure-fund-carlos-m-garcias-destructive-fiscal-policies-hurt-puerto-rico-once-could-it-happen-again/>.
3. Refund America Project, *Wall Street's Power Grab in Puerto Rico* (May 25, 2017), available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/349383136/Wall-Street-s-Power-Grab-in-Puerto-Rico>.
4. Refund America Project, *Goldman's Strong Man in Puerto Rico* (April 28, 2017), available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/346601040/Goldman-s-Strong-Man-in-Puerto-Rico>.
5. Refund America Project, *Down the Wells: Wells Fargo's Payday Loans Have Left Puerto Rico Billions of Dollars in the Hole* (April 24, 2017), available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/346085533/Down-the-Wells>.
6. HedgeClippers, *UPDATE #HedgePapers No. 26 – Puerto Rico: Pain and Profit* (March 21, 2017), available at <http://hedgeclippers.org/puerto-rico-pain-and-profit/>.
7. Joseph E. Stiglitz and Martin Guzman (Nobel Prize winning economists), *From Bad to Worse for Puerto Rico* (Feb 28, 2017), available at <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/puerto-rico-debt-plan-deep-depression-by-joseph-e--stiglitz-and-martin-guzman-2017-02?barrier=accessreg>.
8. Refund America Project, *Beware of Bankers Bearing Gifts: Wall Street Sold Puerto Rico Billions in Predatory Loans Disguised as Gifts* (Feb. 17, 2017), available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/338702218/Beware-of-Bankers-Bearing-Gifts>.

9. HedgeClippers, *UPDATE: Pirates of the Caribbean: How Santander's Revolving Door with Puerto Rico's Development Bank Exacerbated a Fiscal Catastrophe for the Puerto Rican People* (Dec. 16, 2016), available at <http://hedgeclippers.org/pirates-of-the-caribbean-how-santanders-revolving-door-with-puerto-ricos-development-bank-exacerbated-a-fiscal-catastrophe-for-the-puerto-rican-people/>.
10. Center for a New Economy, *Letter to Fiscal Oversight Board regarding Fiscal Plan* (November 15, 2016), available at <http://grupocne.org/2016/11/15/letter-to-fiscal-oversight-board-regarding-fiscal-plan/>.
11. Refund America Project, *Scooping and Tossing Puerto Rico's Future: Puerto Rico Borrowed \$3.2 Billion to Pay Fees & Interest to Banks & Investors* (Aug. 31, 2016), available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/322588236/Scooping-and-Tossing-Puerto-Rico-s-Future>.
12. Joel Cintrón Arbasetti, *Funcionarios se lavan las manos tras autorizar deuda que podría ser ilegal*, Centro de Periodismo Investigativo (Center for Investigative Journalism) (14 de junio 2016), disponible en <http://periodismoinvestigativo.com/2016/06/funcionarios-se-lavan-las-manas-tras-autorizar-deuda-que-podria-ser-ilegal/>.
13. HedgeClippers, #HedgePapers No. 24 – *Puerto Rico Hedge Fund Vulture Holdouts* (Nov. 3, 2015), available at <http://hedgeclippers.org/puerto-rico-hedge-fund-vulture-holdouts/>.
14. HedgeClippers, *Open Letter: Antonio Weiss Must Recuse From Treasury's Puerto Rico Debt Crisis Response* (Sept. 25, 2015), available at <http://hedgeclippers.org/open-letter-antonio-weiss-must-recuse-from-treasurys-puerto-rico-debt-crisis-response/>.
15. HedgeClippers, #HedgePapers No. 17 – *Hedge Fund Vultures In Puerto Rico* (July 10, 2015), available at <http://hedgeclippers.org/hedgepapers-no-17-hedge-fund-billionaires-in-puerto-rico/>.