

February 18, 2014

Honorable Barack Obama  
President  
United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

It has been announced that next March 2014 you will be travelling to Vatican City to meet with Pope Francis. As announced by the White House, your trip is motivated by your desire to exchange with the Holy Father views on your shared commitment to fighting poverty and growing inequality. I take this opportunity to wish you the best of success in this new endeavor which bears great significance in the struggle towards attaining equality and justice for all Humanity. It is based on that personal commitment to justice and human rights that I appeal to you today in this missive.

I must presume that for some persons my message could be a replay of the hundreds of pleas that you have received for the unconditional release of Oscar López Rivera, who has been jailed for more than 32 years. I hope different. It is obvious and uncontested that Oscar López, now, 71 years old, has been held in prison enough, particularly when his conviction was based on the humanly repulsive sedition laws. It has been long since Puerto Ricans have surpassed the profound ideological and political differences that impaired a more peaceful and free coexistence; political differences some of which were planted for the specific purpose of dividing our people and promoting political persecution and discriminatory practices: nothing less than flagrant violations to basic human and constitutional rights. Those times and practices, vestiges of the Cold War, are long gone Mr. President.

But as all freedom lovers demand the release of Alan Gross in Cuba, or praise and honor the sacrifice and struggle of Nelson Mandela in time of his passing away, eulogizing the significance of the effort exerted by millions of freedom loving men and women for his release, notwithstanding the fact that some of his acts were far more destructive than that of demanding a homeland's independence as done by Oscar. We

must agree, Mr. President, that nothing would honor more the struggle for justice and equality for all, than the release of Oscar López. It would send a message of hope for those aggravated by injustice, and a warning to those that insist in curtailing free and democratic coexistence. It would certainly validate the true meaning of your forthcoming encounter with the Holy Father.

The release of Oscar López is more than a simple act of human justice. It would also evidence a true and sincere commitment to basic human rights. Indeed, it would reveal a genuine and moral commitment to freedom, so hopeful and desired by the millions of souls oppressed by political, religious and sectarian persecution and violence; by a flagrant, proliferated and prevailing disregard for fundamental human rights.

Mr. President. Allow me to reassure you that the significance of your meeting with the Holy Father will be enhanced by your unconditional release of Oscar López. I am positive that Pope Francis, like the many millions of Christians committed to world peace and justice, will recognize and honor such feat and gesture.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Truly yours,

Antonio J. Fas-Alzamora

Senator

President of the Senate 2001-2004

Member of the Puerto Rico Legislative Assembly for 37 consecutive years