

November 29, 2016

President Barack H. Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20500  
Re: Oscar Lopez Rivera, 87651-024, FCI Terre Haute

[President@whitehouse.gov](mailto:President@whitehouse.gov)

Dear Mr. President,

As we understand, certain misinformed and biased organizations are calling for you to commute the sentence of Oscar Lopez Rivera, a convicted terrorist and leader of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueño ("FALN"). For the good of the United States, and in service of justice, we strenuously oppose this request and would like to point out the following:

- Lopez Rivera was a leader of the FALN, the most prolific domestic terrorist organization ever to wage war against the United States of America. The FALN claimed responsibility for numerous bombings resulting in the deaths of five innocent people and scores of grave injuries.
- Twelve FALN members (including Lopez Rivera) were arrested in 1980 and 1981. All were convicted in Federal Court of serious felonies including seditious conspiracy and weapons possession.
- Specific testimony confirmed Lopez Rivera's leadership role in the organization and participation in violent felonies. While in jail, Lopez Rivera was twice involved in violent escape attempts.
- Lopez Rivera refused President Clinton's 1999 clemency offer and conditions including renouncing violence.
- Lopez Rivera has never admitted to or accepted responsibility for his terrorist activities nor expressed any remorse for the harm they caused.
- Many of the claims of those pressing for Lopez Rivera's release are blatantly false. **Oscar López Rivera is not a political prisoner or a freedom fighter, he is not innocent of the commission of violent acts, and he is not guilty merely by association.**
- Finally, there is no indication that Lopez himself has followed the normal protocols and has applied for clemency. Rather it seems this is being done on his behalf by others, as was the case in 1999.

The FALN carried out a reign of terror in America from 1974 through 1983 conducting 114 bombings including the infamous January 24, 1975 lunchtime bombing of historic Fraunces Tavern in New York City murdering four innocent people including Frank Connor and Alejandro Berger, and wounded scores, including signer to this letter Bill Newhall. Mr. Connor's sons Thomas and Joseph and his widow, Mary are signers to this letter, as is Mr. Berger's widow Diana.

Mr. Lopez was first identified as a member of the FALN in November, 1976 with the discovery of a bomb factory in Chicago which he operated with fellow FALN members. Lopez successfully evaded police and became a fugitive at that time (Please see attached FBI Wanted Flyer). Between November, 1976 and April, 1980, the FALN conducted an additional fifty one bombings and incendiary attacks, and added mayhem and armed assaults to their repertoire of actions. The FALN threw New York into mayhem one particularly horrendous day in August 1977, when an FALN bomb murdered one and injured many others, and adding to the carnage by calling in scores of bomb threats to the NYPD.

The FALN also conducted coordinated bombings with terrorist organizations in Puerto Rico in October, 1979, and in March, 1980 conducted armed takeovers of Democratic Party campaign headquarters in Chicago and Republican Party campaign

headquarters in New York, threatening campaign workers at gunpoint, binding and gagging them, and stealing lists of delegates to the national conventions who later received threatening letters from the FALN.

In short, the FALN engaged in wanton killing by placing bombs in public and private places during daytime hours with full knowledge they would kill innocent victims. They engaged in a campaign of terror on American streets that resulted in injury to scores of people and they threatened the American political system by direct attack and intimidation to both the Republican and Democratic Party's workers.

In April, 1980 eleven members of the FALN were arrested in Evanston, Illinois. Among them was a new recruit, Freddie Mendez, who ultimately cooperated with the government. Mr. Mendez testified about his experience twice in Federal Court, and in each instance he characterized Oscar Lopez as the man who recruited and trained him in the disciplines of terror as executed by the FALN. At Lopez's direction, Mr. Mendez participated with Lopez in bombings, armed assaults and preparation for a wide variety of attacks. In Mr. Mendez's experience, Lopez was the leader, recruiter and trainer of new members of the group. According to Mr. Mendez, Lopez narrowly escaped capture with other members in Evanston, and immediately began plotting means to free those captured, including by kidnapping the son of then President Ronald Reagan. (Mendez testimony, Lopez trials 1981, 1987)

Mr. Lopez was captured in suburban Chicago in May, 1981 and was tried and convicted for seditious conspiracy, as his fellow FALN members had been. Less than two years later the FBI uncovered a plot to affect the escape from prison by Lopez, which was foiled by FBI intervention. Although Lopez was not charged in that investigation, other FALN members were charged and convicted for seditious conspiracy, an overt act of which was the attempted escape of Lopez.

Having failed to escape with the aid of his fellow FALN members outside prison, Lopez subsequently recruited other prison inmates and concocted another escape plot involving a planned direct attack on the prison and use of a helicopter in a daring mission. Again the FBI learned of the plot and intervened to foil it. Lopez and other conspirators were tried and convicted of various related charges in that investigation, earning Mr. Lopez an additional 15 year sentence consecutive to his prior conviction.

In 1999, despite refusal to recognize the United States' jurisdiction over his case, and never requesting Executive Clemency, Mr. Lopez and several of his co-conspirators were granted clemency by President Clinton. Mr. Clinton and the FALN supporters asserted that those offered clemency had not been convicted of killing or harming anyone. In fact, they were convicted of willfully and knowingly joining a conspiracy to commit various acts of violence, including some 28 bombings in the Chicago area that did maim several people. Further, all evidence indicates that those convicted in Chicago courtrooms were part of the same conspiracy that killed five people in New York.

Tellingly, Mr. Lopez refused the clemency offer and its conditions which included renouncing violence. More than a decade later at a parole hearing he stated that he would not leave prison at that time because his fellow FALN leader, Carlos Torres was not offered clemency and hence had to remain incarcerated. (Mr. Torres, another FALN leader, was not included in the clemency offer.) It is noted that Mr. Lopez was denied parole at his hearing in 2011.

Assertions have been made that Mr. Lopez's sentence was disproportionately long, and had he been sentenced under the current guidelines he would not have received the lengthy sentences he did. This was refuted in an October 1999 submission by the Interim Staff Director of the US Sentencing Commission who reviewed the FALN convictions and concluded that Mr. Lopez and his FALN comrades would have received as long or possibly longer sentences under current guidelines.

Contrary to Lopez' and terror supporters' claims, Lopez and the FALN do not have and have never had the support of the Puerto Rican people for independence. As recently as November, 2012, fully 61% of the Puerto Rican people voted for statehood, and through the years less than 5% of the island population has voted for independence from the United States.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Mr. Lopez has never expressed remorse or engaged in any acts of contrition. Further, Mr. Lopez has never cooperated with authorities. This despite the fact that no one has been charged or convicted of the infamous Fraunces Tavern bombing, in which four were killed, and that there are outstanding fugitives in these investigations.

Several victims of FALN bombings and victims' family members were allowed to appear and speak at Lopez's 2011 parole hearing. They came not with vengeance, but seeking closure, as stated by Joe Connor whose father Frank was murdered in the Fraunces Tavern bombing: "I think we were willing to forgive him and find a sense of closure, but instead of showing contrition, he lied, obfuscated, spoke in circles and denied obvious assertions such as his violent past and FALN leadership. He certainly does not deserve presidential consideration much less a second presidential clemency for the same crimes."

In view of these facts, we believe that Mr. Lopez is most undeserving of any consideration for clemency. His claims of being a political prisoner, of not having a role in the leadership of the FALN, of never having hurt anyone, are out and out lies. While Mr. Lopez may be characterized by terror supporters as an aging individual who represents little threat to the public, he already defiantly refused a previous presidential clemency once and remains an "un-rehabilitated revolutionary" as the sentencing judge called him, unworthy of any beneficence from the Office of the President.

We respectfully submit these facts for consideration in this matter.

Undersigned,

Joseph F. Connor, son of FALN victim Frank Connor  
Richard Hahn, FALN investigator (FBI, retired)  
Thomas Connor, son of FALN victim Frank Connor  
Mary Connor Tully, wife of FALN victim Frank Connor  
Gerard Tully, husband of Mary Connor Tully  
Donald Schlag, cousin of FALN victim Frank Connor  
Diana Berger Ettenson, wife of FALN victim, Alejandro Berger  
Bruce Steinberg, brother of FALN victim Charles Steinberg  
William Newhall, FALN victim  
John Harrison, FALN victim  
Jean Schlag-Nebbia, niece of FALN victim Frank Connor  
Ellen Schlag-Hughes, niece of FALN victim Frank Connor  
Donald Wofford, FALN Investigator, FBI, retired  
Deborah Devaney, former Assistant U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Illinois  
Jeremy Margolis, former Assistant U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Illinois  
Andrew J. Maloney Jr., former U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of New York  
Andrew J. Maloney III, former Assistant U.S. Attorney, Southern District of New York  
Jeff Ingber, journalist  
Jeffrey C. Hayes, FALN investigator (FBI, retired)  
Curt Blanc, FALN investigator (Chicago PD, retired)  
Jerry Lewis, FALN investigator (Chicago PD, retired)  
James L. Norman, (FBI, retired)  
J. Thomas Thurman, (FBI, retired)  
Gerald T. Brandt, Commander Evanston Police (retired)  
Gregory Rodriguez, (FBI retired)  
Robert Buckley, (FBI retired)  
John Eshoo, (Chicago Police retired)  
Edward Gilmore, (US Marshal, Illinois)  
James Anti, (bomb technician)  
Danny Defenbaugh, (FBI retired)  
Michael Heard, (FBI retired)  
Jules Gallet, (Chicago Police, retired)  
John Larsen, (FBI retired)  
Jane McCarty, (FBI retired)  
Marie Brelín, (FBI retired)  
Kevin Illia, (FBI retired)  
Leo West, (FBI retired)  
William Jonkey, (FBI retired)