

VIDAS VIEQUENSES VALEN: STATEMENT UNITED NATIONS  
DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE, JUNE 20, 2016  
MYRNA PAGÁN, SPOKESPERSON: VIDAS VIEQUENSES VALEN

A LITTLE ISLAND SITS UPON A DISTANT SHORE,  
SHE IS THE IMAGE OF PUERTO RICO  
HER BRAVE LITTLE WARRIOR BIRDS  
SING SONGS OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE. ( trans. Isla Nena, Silverio Perez)

I SING TO VIEQUES, ISLAND PARADISE, THE COLONY OF THE COLONY,  
THE LITTLE GIRL ISLAND VICTIM OF SEVEN DECADES OF RACIAL,  
SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC INJUSTICE AS THE SITE OF  
MILITARY EXERCISES BY THE UNITED STATES NAVY AND ITS' NATO  
ALLIES. FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF THE MILITARY TAKEOVER  
THE ISLANDERS RIGHTS HAVE BEEN DENIED AND VIOLATED: THEIR  
LAND EXPROPRIATED, THEIR HOMES BULL-DOZED, THEIR FAMILIES  
DISPLACED, THEIR ENVIRONMENT CONTAMINATED AND THEIR  
ECONOMY SACRIFICED. VIEQUES CONTINUES TO SUFFER AS  
COLLATERAL DAMAGE TO THE MILITARY AGENDA.

TODAY SURVIVAL HAS BECOME A DAUNTING TASK. THERE IS A  
HEALTH CRISIS CAUSED BY THE EXPOSURE TO CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
SUCH AS AGENT ORANGE, AND RADIO ACTIVE MATERIAL SUCH AS  
DEPLETED URANIUM. THE BOMBING WITH A MILLION MILLON  
POUNDS OF EXPLOSIVES AND CONCENTRATIONS OF HEAVY METALS  
HAS RESULTED IN A DEATH RATE FAR SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE  
REST OF PUERTO RICO CAUSED BY CANCER, HYPERTENSION,  
CIRRHOISIS OF THE LIVER, DIABETES AND KIDNEY FAILURE. MY  
HUSBAND DIED VICTIM TO SEVERAL CANCERS. MY 33 YEAR OLD SON  
DIED OF LIVER FAILURE. I AM A SURVIVOR OF UTERINE CANCER.  
EVERY MEMBER OF MY FAMILY, INCLUDING MY GRANDCHILDREN,  
HAS TESTED POSITIVE TO HEAVY METALS. IN 2003 THE WOMEN OF  
VIEQUES SUFFERED THE HIGHEST MERCURY LEVELS OF THE PLANET.

OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH IS CONTAMINATED YET THERE IS NO  
HEALTH PROGRAM TO DEAL SPECIFICALLY WITH THE POISONS OF  
THIS TOXIC "WAR ZONE". THEY SPEAK OF DECONTAMINATION OF  
THE ENVIRONMENT BUT WHAT OF THE PEOPLE? THERE IS NO  
HOSPITAL, AND NO CANCER TREATMENT CENTER. THERE IS AN

EMERGENCY ROOM IN OPERATION BUT IT HAS NO PHARMACY OR MEDICINES. THE MATERNITY WARD HAS BEEN SHUT DOWN. THERE IS NO AVAILABLE AIR-AMBULANCE. THERE ARE ONLY THREE DOCTORS TO SERVICE THOSE IN NEED. THE SICK ABANDON THE ISLAND IN SEARCH OF CARE AND THE POPULATION DWINDLES DAILY. WE HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE NAVY HAS BEEN EXONERATED OF ALL RESPONSIBILITY BY THE FEDERAL AGENCIES. WE DEMAND JUSTICE!

THE PEOPLE OF THE ISLAND ROSE UP IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND WON A BATTLE THAT FORCED THE NAVY TO STOP THE BOMBING AND CLOSE THE BASE. THIRTEEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE A CLEANUP PROCESS WAS INITIATED BUT THE NAVY DRAGS ITS FEET AND TIGHTENS ITS PURSE STRINGS. THEY EMPLOY A PRACTISE OF OPEN BURNING/OPEN DETONATION OF UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE THAT KEEPS EXPOSING US TO DEADLY TOXINS. WE DEMAND THE USE OF DETONATION CHAMBERS AND AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES. THE NAVY CLAIMS "OPEN DETONATION HAS BEEN PROVED TO PROTECT HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT". THESE ARROGANT LIES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. A SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE CLEANUP IS THE ONLY OPTION TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT OF OUR PEOPLE. WE DEMAND JUSTICE!

THE CREATORS OF THE OVERSIGHT "PROMESA" FISCAL JUNTA SPOKE OF THE POSSIBLE SALE OF THE FEDERAL LANDS HELD IN VIEQUES TO PAY PUERTO RICO'S FISCAL DEBT. SOME SENATORS HAVE SUGGESTED THE REINSTATEMENT OF MILITARY EXERCISES IN VIEQUES. AS LONG AS THEY CONTROL THE GREATER PART OF OUR LANDS WE CONTINUE TO BE CORALLED UNDER THEIR ABSOLUTE POWER. WE DEMAND THE DECONTAMINATION AND RETURN OF OUR LANDS! WE DEMAND THE LIBERATION OF OUR LANDS BECAUSE WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENJOY AND DEVELOP OUR PATRIMONY! WE DEMAND JUSTICE! BASTA YA! NO MORE INJUSTICE TOWARDS OUR LIVES AND OUR ENVIRONMENT. IN THE COLONY OF THE COLONY THE PEOPLE ARE TRAUMATIZED, DESPERATE, SICK, IMPOVERISHED AND CONTROLLED; BUT WE ARE WARRIORS, INSPIRED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE NATURE THAT SURROUNDS US, TO CONTINUE OUR STRUGGLE FOR A DIGNIFIED LIFE WHERE WE ENJOY OUR INALIENABLE RIGHTS. VIDAS VIEQUENSES VALEN! PAZ! FREE OSCAR LOPEZ RIVERA...NOW!