

The US is Abandoning its 3.4 Million Citizens in Puerto Rico after 2 Devastating Hurricanes because they did not Vote for Trump

News:

According to CNN reporting on the 12th of October, "President Donald Trump slammed Puerto Rico on Thursday, saying its power grid and infrastructure were a "disaster" before two hurricanes hit last month and he threatened to pull federal emergency management workers from the storm-ravaged island". Trump's remarks are the latest in a series of disparaging remarks about Puerto Rico, and it is strange that he is so insensitive about the suffering of fellow US citizens when "21 days since Maria made landfall, 84 percent of people on the island remained without electricity and only 63 percent had potable water. Many others have been without housing and basic necessities," according to CNN. The death toll is above 40 and the suffering continues.

Comment:

Puerto Rico is a US territory in the Caribbean, and while its 3.4 million inhabitants hold US citizenship, they have no vote in the United States Congress. After two powerful hurricanes, ranked as category 4, devastated Puerto Rico, many have criticized the response of the US government as being insufficient. When Carmen Yulín Cruz, the Mayor of Puerto Rico's capital city San Juan, begged the US Federal government to save them, Trump took offence and blamed her for "poor leadership ability" and said Puerto Rican officials "want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort." Some US Congressmen have criticized Trump's response. Rep. Darren Soto of Florida told NBC News: "Trump continues to treat Americans in Puerto Rico as second-class citizens. He wouldn't be saying this about federal recovery efforts in Texas or Mississippi." Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York asked the president: "Why do you continue to treat Puerto Ricans differently than other Americans when it comes to natural disasters?"

An example of the unfair treatment of Puerto Ricans comes from a doctor with experience of 10 different humanitarian relief efforts who resigned from the team sent to Puerto Rico who said, "I can no longer serve with honor." She reported that disaster response staff used the tents provided for medical care for sick or injured Puerto Rican victims and would bring the locals in "to give the medical workers cut-rate manicures and pedicures," which she called: "gross misuse of taxpayer funds and abuse of our privileged positions personally abhorrent."

Now, President Trump threatens to end aid, and his promised financial assistance to the island is actually a loan of \$4.9 billion, which will increase the island's debts that are already \$74 billion. According to the Governor, "Puerto Rico is on the brink of a massive liquidity crisis that will intensify in the immediate future," with hurricane damage estimated at \$95 billion.

Some history will help explain the discrimination of the US government against Puerto Rico, whose population is mostly Spanish speaking but came under US control after American troops invaded the island in 1898. In 1917, American citizenship was imposed on Puerto Ricans, to enable them to be used as troops to fight in WWI. Puerto Ricans have consistently been a good source of recruits for the US army in many wars since, but despite such a history of service, the people of Puerto Rico have no say in who governs them: they did not vote for Trump or for Clinton in last year's elections and they are termed an 'unincorporated territory', which means that they have no representation in Congress.

The people of Puerto Rico are indeed second class US citizens, and after a month without clean drinking water or sufficient antibiotics, a new public health crisis is emerging from the contaminated water they are forced to drink. If this is what a democracy does with its own citizens when they have no vote, what about the fate of those elsewhere in the world suffering under US hegemony?

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