



**PUERTO RICAN COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH
PENALTY
ANNUAL REPORT 2012
DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION**

I. Historical Background

The death penalty was prohibited by the *Constitution* of the *Commonwealth of Puerto Rico* approved on 1952. Said constitutional¹ prohibition was preceded by Law 42 of April 26, 1929. As of 1952 said right came to be a part of the *Bill of Rights*, therefore it is fundamental “to promote the overall well-being and to ensure for us and our posterity the full enjoyment of the human rights,” just as the *Foreword to the Constitution* in force asserts it. The last execution occurred in 1927.²

The statutory derogation of the death penalty and its constitutional prohibition were the result of a long process of dispute and execration, which was expressed through demonstrations and public protests, essays, poetry, newspaper columns, magazine articles, commutation campaigns, expressions from the leaders of this country, the incorporation of the abolition into the parties’ platforms, acts of civil disobedience, and at least nine bills presented between 1900 and 1927, among others.

“Twenty-eight people (28) were executed between 1898 and 1927: 10 by means of the garrote (before 1903), and 18 by means of the gallows. The great majority were

¹ Article II, section 7 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico specifically prohibits the death penalty where it reads:

“The death penalty shall not exist.” Thus, for the death penalty to be implemented within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico a constitutional amendment to the Bill of Rights is required.

² 2 At the beginning of the 20th century the Penal Code in force in Puerto Rico included the death penalty as a sanction for the crime of first degree murder, according to article 202 of the Penal Code of 1902 (in force since July the 1st of 1902). Article 201 of the Penal Code of 1902, identified as first degree murder those induced by means of “poison, stalking or torture, and all type of willful, deliberate and premeditated deaths or committed while perpetrating or attempting any household arson, kidnapping, theft, assault, or mayhem.”The Penal Code of 1902 replaced the “former Code of Criminal Procedure,” which was in effect during the period of Spanish rule, and continued to be in effect by virtue of the “Foraker Law” (of 1900).

youngsters, mulattos and day laborers.³ The derogation of the death penalty in Puerto Rico turned this jurisdiction into an abolitionist one with the support of people and institutions representative of the parties and political movements, human and civil rights advocates, churches, professional associations and non-governmental institutions. Therefore, some of the main characteristics and legacies of Puerto Rican abolitionism are its consistency, diversity and breadth.

II. Puerto Ricans exposure to death penalty

Regardless of the aforementioned, Puerto Ricans face the possibility of getting the capital punishment on account of federal legislation from the United States government,⁴ extradition,⁵ the perpetration of a crime that carries such punishment in another jurisdiction,⁶ and military legislation.⁷

A. Death penalty federal legislation

By virtue of its political relationship, the Laws of the United States federal government preempt the Laws of Puerto Rico, including its Constitution. Therefore, the

³ *La pena de muerte en Puerto Rico; retrospectión histórica para una reflexión contemporánea*, (*The death penalty in Puerto Rico; historical retrospection for a contemporary reflection*), Gaviota Publishing, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, Second Edition revised, 2011, page 65, by Jalil Sued Badillo. On this subject see also, Jacobo Córdoba Chirino, *Los que murieron en la horca* (*Those who died in the gallows*), Cordillera Publishing, San Juan, Puerto Rico, sixth edition, 2007; and Nahomi Galindo Malavé, *Entre el Garrote y la Horca, La oposición a la pena de muerte en Puerto Rico* (*Between the Garrote and the Gallows, Opposition to the death penalty in Puerto Rico*), 1898-1910, *Pensamiento Crítico* (*Critical Thinking*), 2006, number 97, fall 2006, pages 4 through 12; and Lina M. Torres Rivera, *El debate en torno a la pena de muerte en el Sistema penal y reacción social* (*The debate around the death penalty issue in the Penal system and social reaction*), third edition, 2009, San Juan, Puerto Rican Publishing, pages 149-166.

⁴ *Federal Death Penalty Act*, 18 U.S.C.A. sec. 3591, et. Seq. (1994). A list of federal crimes that could be punishable by death is contained in Luis Guzmán Dupont's article, *El asesinato legal en Puerto Rico* (*Legal murder in Puerto Rico*), Puerto Rico Bar Association's Magazine, Law and Forum, year 4, number 1, pages 6 through 11. It is about a list of over 60 crimes. See also, Elizabeth Vicens, *Application of the Federal Death Penalty Act to Puerto Rico: a New Test for the Locally Inapplicable Standard*, 80 New York University, Law Review 106. <http://www.law.nyu.edu/journals/lawreview/issues/vol80/no1/NYU106.pdf>

⁵ **Pueblo v. Martínez Cruz**, 2006 T.S.P.R. 74

⁶ According to the 2010 census, the population of Puerto Ricans who live in the metropolis (4.62 millions) exceeds Puerto Rico's entire population (3.97 millions) for the first time. Ennis, S., Ríos-Vargas, M. and Albert, N. *The Hispanic population: 2010*. US Census Bureau, May 2011.

⁷ *Uniform Code of Military Justice*, see historical and statistical data on <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/us-military-death-penalty>

constitutional prohibition of the death penalty does not work in favor of a defendant charged with crimes committed in Puerto Rico, when the criminal process is carried out under federal legislation.⁸ In such case, the proceedings take place in Federal District Court, for the District of Puerto Rico. Contrary to what happens in Puerto Rico, the death penalty is an option within the federal legislation as punishment or criminal sanction.

Between 1988 and September of 2012 the Federal Justice Department authorized the certification of 488 federal death penalty cases in all of the United States. Out of these, some 23 cases (4.71%) belonged to the Federal District of Puerto Rico. Said district ranks number seven in the amount of federal certified death penalty cases for said period:

Virginia- 57	Maryland-26
New York- 45	Missouri- 28
California- 42	Puerto Rico- 23
Texas- 30	Pennsylvania- 22 ⁹

Between 1995 and 2012, 65 death eligible cases were presented at Federal District Court, for the District of Puerto Rico, for a total average of 3.6 cases per year. For the past four years the average death eligible cases presented increased to 5.75 per year. On 2012 seven eligible cases were presented. Almost half of the cases, 30 out of 65 (46.15%), that actually qualified for the death penalty, were for the crime of murder, committed during a carjacking.

By the end of 2012, there were 15 death penalty cases pending for trial in Federal Court for the District of Puerto Rico. See list of the three certified cases, and of 12 other cases, pending certification, which were identified with their case number in this section of the report.

Additionally, Puerto Rico holds one of the highest murder rates. Between the years of 1995 and 2011, 13,612 people were killed in Puerto Rico, for an annual average of approximately 800 people, and an average rate of murders of 21.08 for every 100,000 residents, for the last 17 years. The murder annual average rate for

⁸ **U.S. v. Acosta Martínez**, 252 F. 3d 13 (1st Cir. 2001).

⁹ Information taken from the *Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel Project*.

2008 through 2011 went up to 1,000, for a total increase of 21%. Nine hundred-seventy-eight (978) murders¹⁰ took place in 2012; the fourth year with the most homicides in Puerto Rico's history. "The great majority of violent deaths (75.56%) occurred on public roads, and were caused by firearms (91%). A bit less than half of the murders were registered around San Juan, Bayamón and Carolina police areas."¹¹ On the other hand, out of the 978 registered homicides in 2012, some 739 (76.1%) occurred right on the street; "almost twice the amount of 414 violent deaths reported in the city of New York this year."¹²

The high criminal incidence, particularly regarding murder cases, the high percentage of these that go unresolved, the random violence and its conspicuousness, have caused an increase in the demands to attend to said crime problem. Among these is the referral of a greater number of homicide cases to the federal jurisdiction. In addition to that, it has caused overcrowding issues at the Federal Detention Facility.¹³

That element, along with the alliance between the *Commonwealth of Puerto Rico* and federal authorities,¹⁴ has caused an increase in criminal cases in the federal jurisdiction, an overflow in the *Metropolitan Detention Center* (MDC), and a rising threat of a death penalty sentence.¹⁵ It has been resorted to the bringing of federal judges

¹⁰ On the electronic version of *Primera Hora*, of January 1, 2013, it was indicated that "the Police Press Office explained that year 2012 closed with 978 homicides, 186 less than those reported in year 2011." On the other hand, on the written version of *El Nuevo Día* newspaper, of December 31, 2012, page 10, it was informed that as of December 30th the figure was 971. The figure is not conclusive, nor official, because "cases undergoing examination by the Institute of Forensics are to be added" to the data on homicides provided by the Police of Puerto Rico. See digital version of *El Nuevo Día*, from January 1, 2013.

¹¹ *El Nuevo Día*, December 27, 2012, page 35.

¹² *El Nuevo Día*, December 31, 2012, page 10.

¹³ *El Nuevo Día*, November 28, 2012, pages 4 and 5. According to the news the Federal Detention Center can hold up to 1,200 inmates, and has a penal population of 1,350, as of November 20, according to Judge Aida Delgado; and 1,584, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, as of November 22, 2012. The Chief of Federal District Attorney in Puerto Rico, Rosa Emilia Rodríguez Vélez indicated that renting a state detention facility to tend to the overcrowding problem was being considered. *El Nuevo Día*, November 29, 2012, page 10. Nevertheless, in *El Nuevo Día*, December 4, 2012's issue, it was said that the maximum capacity of the state prison system is 14,276, and it currently has 12,407 inmates. The headline read: "There won't be room for a single more inmate by 2016."

¹⁴ It refers to *Memorandum of Understanding* of February 2, 2010.

¹⁵ See *El Nuevo Día*, November 21, 2012, page 12. For figures on murders from 1993 to 2012 (projected figures) see *El Nuevo Día*, November 26, 2012, page 32.

from the United States to preside over trials in Federal Court in Puerto Rico, to lessen the burden of the judges appointed to such forum, and so they can attend to death penalty cases that ordinarily tend to be more complex and lengthy.¹⁶

The information presented in this annual report covers the situation about death penalty cases, regarding Puerto Ricans who face death penalty proceedings in the federal jurisdiction, as well as in those states of the U.S. where such punishment is strictly upheld, and a case of petition for extradition.

B. Federal Cases

The United States federal jurisdiction exercised in Puerto Rico is one of the most active regarding the certification of death penalty cases. Nevertheless, there has never been a death sentence imposed, only life imprisonment.¹⁷

At the beginning of year 2012 there were two (2) death penalty cases duly certified, and awaiting trial, and nine (9) additional cases pending certification, for a total of eleven (11) cases.

The most recent death penalty judicial proceeding, the one on Edison Burgos Montes¹⁸, was the object of a trial in which the jury found the defendant guilty, and sentenced him to life imprisonment. The proceeding lasted from April 16, 2012¹⁹ to September 27, 2012,²⁰ and it took over the front page of the main newspapers and dominated the public debate about the subject.

In 2012 two new cases were certified,²¹ for a total of three certified cases pending trial, with court dates between the months of January and March of 2013. The

¹⁶ *El Nuevo Día*, December 4, 2012, pages 26 and 27. Judge David Brock Hornby, from Maine's District, and Judge William E. Smith, from Rhode Island's District are identified.

¹⁷ Four (4) trials have been carried out since 2003, in which the defendants were exposed to the death penalty: **U.S. v. Acosta- Martínez**, 106 F. Supp. 2d 311; 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 10370 (Federal District Court Case num.) and 252 F. 3d 13 (2001); **U.S. v. Hernando Medina -Villegas and Lorenzo Vladimir Catalán- Román**, 3:02-cr-00117-PG-3; **U.S. v. Carlos Ayala - López** 3:03-cr- 00055-JAG-JA-1 and, **U.S. v. Edison Burgos**, cr-06-009 (JAG).

¹⁸ **U.S. v. Edison Burgos**, 06-009 (JAG) and **Lashaun Casey**, 05-Cr-277 (ADC).

¹⁹ *El Nuevo Día*, April 16, 2012, pages 8 and 10.

²⁰ *El Nuevo Día*, September 28, 2012, front page, and pages 4 through 14.

²¹ Cases against Alexis Candelaria (*El Nuevo Día*, July 10, 2012, page 26), and against Xavier Jiménez-Bencevi (*El Nuevo Día*, December 8, 2012, page 12) were certified.

Attorney General of the United States decertified three cases, and initiated the certification process of another five, during the same period of time.²² Last year, seven cases, which could end up with a death penalty sentence, were initiated. It is the most active year ever:

2000- 2 new cases
2001- 2 new cases
2002- 2 new cases
2003- 2 new cases
2004- 2 new cases
2005- 2 new cases
2006- 3 new cases
2007- 4 new cases
2008- 3 new cases
2009- 5 new cases
2010- 1 new case
2011- 3 new cases
2012- 7 new cases

By the end of 2012 there are three certified cases pending trial, namely:

1. U.S.A. v. Lashaun Casey, 05-Cr-277 (ADC),²³ trial scheduled to begin on **January 22, 2013.**
2. U.S.A. v. Candelario-Santana,09-Cr-427 (JAF), trial scheduled to begin on **January 8, 2013** (case of “La Tómbola” bar, several murders)
3. U.S.A. v. Jiménez-Bencevi, et al, 12-Cr-221 (JAF), certified on December 7, 2012, trial scheduled to begin on March 19, 2013.

As of the end of 2012 there are 12 federal cases that qualify for the death penalty, and are pending certification, namely:

²² On the digital version of *El Vocero*, from December 13, 2012, it was informed that the cases against Alexis Amador Huggins and John Anthony Morales were recanted, facing the possibility of life imprisonment, if convicted of Stefano Steenbakkers’ murder. On the other hand, the case of **U.S.A. v. Rivera-Clemente**, 11-cr-499 (JAF), Frankie Rondón-Rosario murder’s case, a security guard for the military base in Sabana Seca, which occurred on October 19, 2011, was not certified, due to a sanction imposed by Judge Fusté, according to *El Vocero*, digital edition of December 26, 2012.

²³ The initials of the judge who has been assigned to the case are in parentheses.

1. U.S.A. v. Vázquez-Rijos, 08-Cr-216 (DRD)
2. U.S.A. v. Lebrón-Sánchez, 09-Cr-594 (M)
3. U.S.A. v. Aguilera-Enchautegui, 10-Cr-093 (GAG)
4. U.S.A. v. Casillas-Sierra, 10-Cr-103 (JAG)
5. U.S.A. v. Ortiz-Torres, 10-Cr-138 (GAG)
6. U.S.A. v. Velázquez-Aponte, 11-Cr-258 (DRD)
7. U.S.A. v. Soto-Flores, 11-Cr-572 (CCC)
8. U.S.A. v. Sánchez-Martínez, et al, 12-Cr-036 (CCC)
9. U.S.A. v. Ramos-Piñero, et al, 12-Cr-200 (JAF) (This case has not been yet certified, but the judge set its first court date for the month of October of 2013.)²⁴
10. U.S.A. v. Seary-Colón, 12-Cr-00312 (GAG)²⁵
11. U.S.A. v. Rolón-Rodríguez, 12-Cr-785 (M)²⁶
12. U.S.A. v. Edwin Torres-Osorio, Lenisse “Prieta” Aponte-Aponte and Alejandra “Pochi” Berríos-Cotto, 12-Cr-931 (DRD)

According to the Federal Court judicial calendar for the District of Puerto Rico, about four trials that qualify for the death penalty could be held in 2013:

1. U.S.A. v. Lashaun Cassey, January 22 of 2013 (He is accused of murdering an undercover cop.)
2. U.S.A. v. Candelario-Santana, January 8, 2013 (He is accused of committing 8 murders at the so called “Massacre of *La Tómbola*.” Nevertheless, he is hold responsible for some 21 murders.)
3. U.S.A. v. Jiménez-Bencevi, March 19, 2013 (He is charged with murdering a federal female witness.)

²⁴ A list of the ten cases that are mentioned, with the description of the offenses, and the identity of the victims, appears in *El Nuevo Día* newspaper, on the July 13, 2012 issue, pages 34 and 35.

²⁵ See digital edition of “Primera Hora” (news), from April 23 of 2012. The defendant Enrique Seary-Colón, alias “el diablo,” is charged with the murder of David Hernández, a businessman. The defendant was denied bail, due to him been considered a flight risk, “since he was charged, even though absent, for the murder of a contractor during a burglary, and was a fugitive at the time, in 2009.” The defendant was sentenced, even though he was not present, for a murder occurred in Canóvanas, on July 31 of 2009. See digital edition of *endi.com*, of July 10 of 2012.

²⁶ See “Primera Hora” (news), the May 25, 2012 edition, page 8. Daniel Rodríguez is charged with carjacking in Ponce, which ended up with the death of Sylvio Luis Meléndez-Vázquez, who assisted Milagros Torres-Cruz, while the defendant was stealing her car.

4. U.S.A. v. Ramos-Piñero, October,2013 (In this case Jean Carlos-Ramos, Edwin Bernard-Astacio and Luis D. Rivera-Carrasquillo, to whom the state holds responsible for about eight murders, are exposed to the death penalty.)²⁷

C. Release of a defendant from prison²⁸

Jordan Ayala Cruz, 21 years old, charged with the murder of Stefano Steenbakkers, was released from prison in 2012. Young Mr. Cruz, though innocent, was arrested and incarcerated at the Federal Jail, without bail, and in solitary confinement for two weeks.²⁹ He would have been exposed to the death penalty, had he been found guilty.

D. Extradition case

An extradition hearing against Erasmo Cruz-Cruz will be held on January 24th of 2012. At the moment of his arrest he faced charges that carried the death penalty in Pennsylvania, if he would have been convicted of it (Case KMI 2012-0215, at the Court of First Instance in San Juan). On January 2, 2013, the District Attorney's Office for the state of Pennsylvania indicated that the death penalty would not be requested in the case. The Supreme Court of Puerto Rico resolved that the Government of Puerto Rico lacks the discretion to deny extraditing a defendant to any jurisdiction of the U.S., even in those cases in which a person's life is in jeopardy.³⁰

E. Puerto Ricans sentenced to death in the U.S.

It is estimated that in the United States there were 3,152 people sentenced to the death penalty, as of October 1of 2012, out of which about³¹ 390 (12.4%) are labeled as

²⁷ F.B.I. press release of March 28, 2012.

²⁸ The topic of the exonerated is vital to understand the grave danger and the failure of justice that implies convicting and executing and innocent person. In the U.S., around 142 inmates that were sentenced to death, between 1973 and 2012, have been exonerated. The most recent one was Seth Penalver, who was exonerated in Florida, on December 21, 2012. (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)

²⁹ Digital Version of "Primera Hora", from July 18, 2012. *El Nuevo Día*, July 19, 2012, front page and pages 4, 5 and 8.

³⁰ **People v. Martínez-Cruz**, 2006 T.S.P.R. 74.

³¹ Information source: NAACP, Legal Defense Fund, "Death Row USA" (October 1, 2012), just as it has been published in <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/FactSheet.pdf>.

Latinos.³² The exact amount of Puerto Ricans sentenced to death in the different jurisdictions of the United States is uncertain, at the moment. A list, elaborated by the *Institute of Investigation and Support of the Human Rights* (INIPRODEH- *Instituto de Investigación y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos*) of the University of the Sacred Heart (*Universidad del Sagrado Corazón*), includes 32 Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rican descendants sentenced to death in seven states and one in the federal jurisdiction.³³ This is an investigation that is currently in progress. The list refers to people known up to September 30 of 2011.

It should be pointed out that investigators identified about 14 cases of other Puerto Ricans or Puerto Rican descendants who were on death row for the past decades.³⁴ The last execution of a Puerto Rican in the United States was that of Angel Nieves Díaz, on December 13 of 2006, in Florida.

The state and federal government prison systems do not classify the inmates by nationality or origin. They are mainly classified as Hispanics or Latinos, but there are also Puerto Ricans referred to as black, white ones or others, thus hindering their identification.

III. Public Opinion

Regarding public opinion and the debate about the death penalty, it is obvious they both favor and agree with an abolitionist standpoint. Expressions against the death penalty came from an ample array of religious, politic, professional, and academic sectors, as well as from human and civil rights advocacy groups, and from relatives of murder victims.

In 2012 four editorials were published on two daily newspapers, about eleven news columns on opinions, and three brief interviews in which the candidates running for governor and Resident Commissioner from the *New Progressive Party* (in office

³² *Ibíd.*

³³ This topic has been investigated by the professors Lina Torres and Carmelo Campos, who are members of CPCPM, for the *Institute of Investigation and Support of the Human Rights* (INIPRODEH) from the Univesidad del Sagrado Corazón. See *El Nuevo Día*, April 29 of 2012, page 53.

³⁴ Out of these 14 people, two were acquitted for their innocence, one died due to health reasons, eight of them had their sentences commuted for life imprisonment, and two committed suicide.

since 2008) and from the *Popular Democratic Party* (in office as of January of 2013) were unanimously opposed to the death penalty.

The rest of the parties with electoral presence, the *Puerto Rican Independence Party*, *Party of the Working People*, *Movimiento Unión Soberanista*, and the *Puerto Ricans for Puerto Rico Party*, took part in the demonstrations against the death penalty. Several movements, such as: *Workers Socialist Movement*, *Movement to Socialism*, and *Hostos National Independence Movement*, supported the cause as well. The abolitionist cause received support demonstrations from the parties and political movements from all ideologies, something unusual in the scene of public debate.

The support of the religious sector was equally extensive and noteworthy. Participation from churches such as: Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, and the *Church of Jesus Healer*, as well as the *Council of Churches*, the *Jesus Mediator Fellowship*, *Pax Christi*, and the *Catholic Alliance for Peace and Life*, was evident during the watches carried out in front of the Federal Court building, on occasion of the case against Edison Burgos.

Other sectors such as the pacifist organization *Mothers Against War*, the spiritualists (espiritistas), various feminist and professional groups, and civil and human rights groups, were similarly present at the vigils, and made manifest their abolitionist commitment.

There were just a few expressions in favor of the death penalty. Only one news column on opinions was published, three interviews and one letter to the reader throughout all 2012. Nevertheless, several expressions in favor of the death penalty, made by electronic means and radio, were confirmed, particularly related to very cruel murders that outraged the public opinion.

A. Expressions at the international level

At the international level, the subject of the imposition of the death penalty has been brought up by the *Puerto Rican Coalition against the Death Penalty* (CPCPM) to the attention of the *Special Committee on Decolonization* from the *United Nations* (UN). The Coalition has come before such Committee since 2009. The address presented in

2011 was recently attached to a publication about the human rights in Puerto Rico.³⁵ The 2012 address was presented this past 18th of June.³⁶ The CPCPM claimed:

First: May this Commission's Resolution include that Puerto Rico is the only jurisdiction in the whole world where its constituents abolished the death penalty constitutionally, in accordance with the will of the people, and despite this, a United States legislation is imposed, in which the death penalty is authorized through a judicial process, in a different language other than the vernacular one;

Second: May a resolution, in which the Government of the United States is required to declare, in a total and immediate fashion, a moratorium on the certifications of death penalty cases, be adopted, and prohibit its use in criminal proceedings already initiated before the Federal District Court for the District of Puerto Rico, and;

Third: Just like other expositors, we request that Puerto Rico's case be referred to a plenary session within the General Assembly, for discussion.

These three petitions respond to the will of sovereign nations expressed in Resolution 1514 (XV) of the United Nations General Assembly; the most significant in its first twenty years.

We want to point out that the following organizations endorse these three petitions: *Puerto Rico Bar Association*, *Institute of Investigation and Support of the Human Rights (INIPRODEH)*,³⁷ *Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS, Movement towards Socialism)*, *Partido del Pueblo Trabajador (PPT- Party of the Working People)*, *Hermanas Dominicanas Misioneras del*

³⁵Javier Colón -Morera, Idsa E. Alegría-Ortega, editors, *Puerto Rico and the human rights: a plural intersection*, Callejón Publishing, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2012.

³⁶ The report on this hearing can be accessed at:
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gaco13240.doc.htm>

³⁷ The Institute is part of the University of the Sacred Heart (Universidad del Sagrado Corazón).

Rosario (Rosario Missionary Dominican Sisters), *Hermanas de la Divina Providencia* (Sisters of the Divine Providence), and *Comunidad Jesús Mediador* (Jesus Mediator Fellowship).”

The subject of the death penalty was not incorporated to the 2012 resolution, nor to any of the previous ones from such Committee, thus being a part of the Coalition’s inconclusive agenda.³⁸

A bulletin was distributed at the international level, and the Coalition participated at the Annual Assembly of the *World Coalition against the Death Penalty*, last June, in Jordan. There, the representative of the CPCPM was invited to take part in a discussion panel about the challenges of the abolitionism movement, during the *World Coalition Tenth Anniversary*. *Amnesty International* published an interview made to Carmelo Campos-Cruz, member of the Coalition, in the September-October’s edition of **Wire** magazine (this organization’s international publication in English, French and Arabic) where the death penalty situation in Puerto Rico is discussed.³⁹

Regarding the Caribbean, the development of an abolitionist front from the region, designated *Gran Caribe por la Vida* (Great Caribbean for Life), has been endorsed. The CPCPM serves as its Secretary.

³⁸ One difficulty we face as we try to include our claims in the resolution about Puerto Rico’s case is that the majority of the members of the Committee are retentionists-where such punishment is strictly upheld.

³⁹ *Wire*, vol. 42, Issue 005, September/October 2012, pages 8-9. Available at: http://www.amnesty.org/sites/impact.amnesty.org/files/Wire_SepOct12_web.pdf