



## **Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) Declares Solidarity with University of Puerto Rico Strike**

The Caribbean Studies Association, an international organization of more than 1,000 scholars and practitioners specializing in the Caribbean, declares its solidarity with the student strike at the University of Puerto Rico, which is now entering its sixth week in 10 of 11 campuses.

As an organization focused on the Caribbean, we recognize the importance of the University of Puerto Rico as an intellectual leader in the Caribbean and support the UPR community in their efforts to defend public access to higher education and preserve the integrity and intellectual legacy of this important and historic institution. We underscore the need for transparency and for the true spirit of democracy to flourish during these difficult times. Moreover, we condemn the excessive force that the Puerto Rican police have deployed, at the behest of the government and the university administration, and caution against the strike ending through such repressive methods. We decry the militarization of the campuses; the acts of police brutality committed against students and their parents, as well as the denial of food, water, and medical care to striking students in past weeks. We are equally disturbed by the unsafe conditions established by the administration at certain student assemblies and the use of dangerous weaponry during peaceful protests and assemblies – all of which are a violation of basic civil rights and freedom of expression.

We see these actions as obvious anti-democratic violations of both human and civic rights that threaten the future of higher learning in the entire Caribbean. We highlight the need for university autonomy from government, so that the University of Puerto Rico may function as it was mandated to, not as a tool of political exploitation and retaliation. We urge the peaceful and rapid resolution of the outstanding issues that have created the need to strike through honest negotiation and mutual respect.