



A man carries containers filled with water from a tank truck in Canovanas, Puerto Rico, Sept. 26. (CNS/Carlos Garcia Rawlins, Reuters)



by Mario T. García

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

October 4, 2017

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

Donald Trump has revived the stereotype of the "lazy Mexican." However, he is applying it to Puerto Ricans on the island. They are the "lazy Puerto Ricans." He has revived this racist stereotype by falsely suggesting that the Puerto Ricans are not doing enough to help themselves after the disaster of Hurricane Maria.

...want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort. 10,000 Federal workers now on Island doing a fantastic job.

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [September 30, 2017](#)

He says that they are complaining too much and not working to rebuild their homes and businesses. What planet does Trump live on? All images we see from the island are of people trying to reconstruct their homes, businesses, and trying to get food, water, gasoline and medical supplies. They are not lazy and yet they need much more help than the federal government is providing to deal with this humanitarian disaster.

Interestingly, Trump did not accuse the people in Houston or in Florida of being lazy. Is it because he inherently believes that Latinos are lazy and welfare addicted — all false racist concepts? Or maybe because he believes that Puerto Ricans on the island are not really Americans. He and most probably many other Americans are just finding out that Puerto Rico is not a foreign country. It is a U.S. possession — a so-called commonwealth — and its people are U.S. citizens which was granted to them a few years after the United States conquered Puerto Rico from Spain in the Spanish-American War — the so-called "[splendid little war](#)."

Puerto Ricans deserve our support and will need billions of dollars now and in the foreseeable future to reconstruct their island. But we have to do this with an understanding that these are our people and that they are fellow Americans. They are not lazy but hardworking people but people who can't do it alone. The Trump administration has to propose to the Congress a massive aid bill to help an American possession. Trump's insensitive and racist comments about lazy Puerto Ricans — a revival of the "lazy Mexican" syndrome — is not helpful.

[Related:](#) [With prayer, Catholics in Puerto Rico deal with Hurricane Maria's wrath](#)

Perhaps if Trump paid less attention to his likewise racist attitude toward mostly African-American NFL players who are utilizing their First Amendment rights to protest continued racism, police violence and racial inequality, and did his job — which is to help Americans in need — Puerto Ricans would not be experiencing such an awful condition. At least they would know that the rest of America had their back. We need to put pressure on Trump to do his job and do the right thing by spearheading the financial and material commitment to reconstruct Puerto Rico. It is the American thing to do.

Advertisement

We need to see Trump in Puerto Rico leading this reconstruction, and not images of him playing golf while Americans in Puerto Rico have no electricity, not enough food, and hospitals without needed medical supplies.