

ly paper with **The New York Times News Service** in English in Puerto Rico, publishes 7 days a week, Tuesday and Thursday edition, along with a Weekend Edition to cover Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

OAS has yet to issue a ruling on PR status case filed in 2006

By THE STAR STAFF

Pro-statehood advocate Gregorio Igartúa has written to the Organization of American States (OAS) urging the international body to issue a ruling it has had pending since 2006 in a complaint that seeks to achieve voting rights for Puerto Rico in United States elections.

A hearing on the petition was held in Boulder, Colorado in 2018, 12 years after the filing of the original complaint in 2006. The complaint accuses the United States of violating international law by denying voting rights to Puerto Rico in federal elections.

"I respectfully request from the Commission [the OAS' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, or ICHR] that it dispose finally of the case this year without further delays (14 years), as legally required in protection of our due process rights," Igartúa wrote. "A final determination has been overdue since 2006 to the effect that the U.S. is in violation of its domestic and international obligations by denying American Citizens their federal voting rights."

Also overdue, the attorney said, is an order by the ICHR to the United States to take the required affirmative

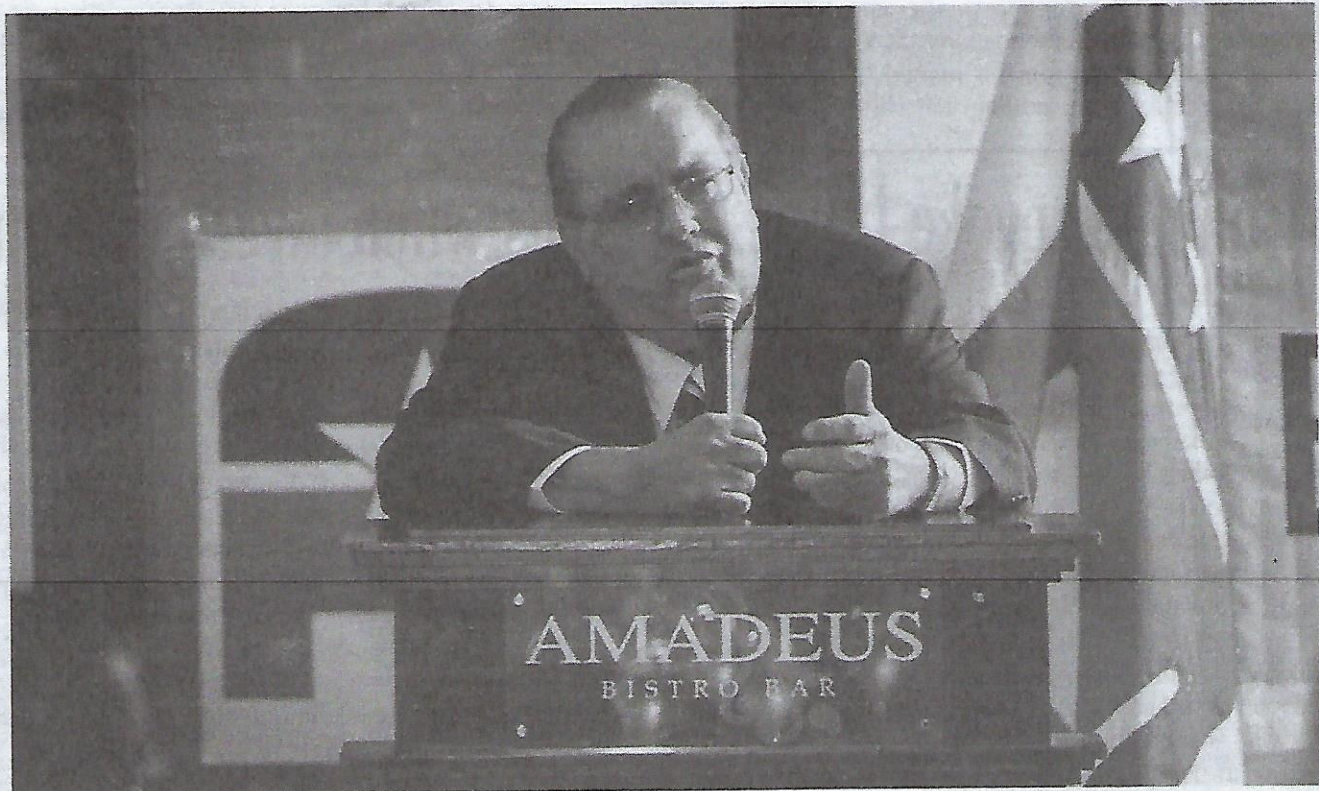
action to end the discriminatory denial.

"The violation of our human rights by the denial of our federal voting rights is one that should not be allowed to continue by further delays within the Commission," Igartúa wrote. "It is questionable for the Commission to continue to delay final disposition of this complaint filed [in] 2006, a hearing held 12 years later, in October 2018, and now final disposition pending."

Igartúa said the ICHR appears to be afraid.

"Apparently [OAS Secretary General] Mr. [Luis] Almagro, after 14 years it seems that for unknown reasons the ICHR of the OAS does not dare to dispose of the Complaint," he wrote.

The letter comes as the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources' Office of Insular Affairs will hold a remote full committee legislative hearing today on the Insular Cases, court rulings from the beginning of the 20th century that critics say justify discrimination against the U.S. territories. No one from Puerto Rico was invited to participate as a witness, complained Igartúa, who initially was slated to testify but was not included on the hearing list. Officials from American Samoa and Guam are among the speakers.



Gregorio Igartúa, an attorney and advocate of statehood for Puerto Rico, is pressing the Organization of American States for a ruling on a case involving U.S. voting rights for the island that was filed in 2006.

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