INTRODUCTION
Populated for centuries by aboriginal peoples, the island was claimed by the Spanish Crown in 1493 following Christopher COLUMBUS' second voyage to the Americas. Puerto Rico was ceded to the US as a result of the Spanish-American War. Puerto Ricans were granted US citizenship in 1917. For decades plebiscites showed that voters chose not to alter the existing political status with the US, but a 2020 vote showed a narrow preference for American statehood.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Joseph R. BIDEN Jr.
Head of Government
Governor Pedro PIERLUISI
Government Type
unincorporated organized territory of the US with local self-government; republican form of government with separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches;
Capital
San Juan
Legislature
bicameral Legislative Assembly or Asamblea Legislativa consists of the Senate or Senado (30 seats) and the House of Representatives or Camara de Representantes (51 seats)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
3.1 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
-1.46% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
White 75.8%, Black/African American 12.4%, other 8.5% (includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, and others), mixed 3.3% (2010 est.)
Language
Spanish, English
Religion
Roman Catholic 56%, Protestant 33% (largely Pentecostal), other 2%, atheist 1%, none 7% (2014 est.)