# NYC welcomes Janet Africa and Janine Africa

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Janine Africa, Janet Africa and Eddie Africa. SLL photo: Greg Butterfield

More than 200 people packed The People's Forum in Manhattan on July 19 to welcome Janet Africa and Janine Africa to New York City. The two members of the MOVE family had been jailed for 40 years before being released on May 25, African Liberation Day.

They and the other members of the MOVE 9 spent decades in prison after being framed by a corrupt and racist court system. Two of the MOVE 9 — Charles Africa and Delbert Africa — are still in prison. (Eddie Africa was freed on June 21.) Merle Africa and Phil Africa died in prison under suspicious circumstances.

Fascist Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo — who told his supporters to "vote white" — ordered police to attack the MOVE house in the Powelton Village neighborhood on Aug. 8, 1978. The cops shot so furiously at the adults and children there that they killed one of their own, Officer James Ramp.

It was impossible for any of the MOVE members — who were barricaded in the basement — to have fired the downward shot that killed Ramp. Even Judge Edward Malmed admitted that he didn't have "the faintest idea" who killed the cop.

That didn't prevent Malmed from sentencing nine members of the MOVE families to 30 to 100 years in jail. What sort of justice is that?

## Forty years in hell

A special highlight of the meeting was Mumia Abu-Jamal calling in from prison. This was the first time that Mumia was able to talk to Janine Africa and Janet Africa since he himself was framed and unjustly incarcerated in 1981.

Janet and Janine described the hell they went through in Pennsylvania prisons. They and the other MOVE 9 members were beaten by guards.

Upon arriving in prison, Janet and Janine were immediately put in "the hole" —

solitary confinement. The warden told them they would stay there and they did stay there for a long time.

In 1985, the women were told that their children had been killed while they were still in solitary confinement. The guards told them their children were dead without further explanation.

They had to rely on overheard conversation among other prisoners in the prison yard to glean that the Philadelphia police and FBI had bombed the MOVE house on Osage Avenue on May 13, 1985, killing six adults and five children.

Janine Africa and Janet Africa have not been crushed by the horrendous ordeals they have suffered. They say it is the unbroken solidarity of the MOVE family and support of many others that gave them the strength to survive.

When the MOVE women spoke in the meeting, remarkably strong and vibrant, they said they plan to dedicate themselves to fighting for the rights and freedom of other prisoners, especially Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Carlos Africa told about how he and other MOVE members locked up in the now-closed Holmesburg Prison in Northeast Philly demanded justice for the MOVE 9. They were viciously attacked by guards and riot police who tried to kill the MOVE members.

Suzanne Ross chaired the meeting, which also featured Pam Africa. Orie Lumumba spoke on the next steps to free Delbert Africa. Kaila Paulino performed a beautiful song. Ralph Poynter energized the audience by dramatically raising funds to further the struggle.

It was the power of the people that freed Janet Africa and Janine Africa after almost 41 years of hell. We have to organize more of that power to free the remaining MOVE 9 members in jail — Charles Africa and Delbert Africa — and to free Mumia

Abu-Jamal.