

San Diego mobilizes to bring Mumia Abu-Jamal home

written by Gloria Verdieu
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SLL photo

On the weekend of his 69th birthday celebration, the San Diego Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and All Political Prisoners held a meeting to honor the world-famous political prisoner, revolutionary journalist, and author. The San Diego Black Panther Party co-hosted the gathering of community organizations at the Malcolm X Library on April 22.

We joined in solidarity with activists in many cities nationally and internationally under the theme of “Mobilizing to Bring Mumia Home.” We demand that the United States government free Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners, prisoners of conscience and prisoners of war. We acknowledge that all prisoners are political prisoners of the corrupt, racist, for-profit prison-industrial complex.

The meeting began with a slide presentation of a partial list of current incarcerated political prisoners, released and exonerated prisoners, and prisoners who have joined the ancestors. Most on the list were compiled by the Jericho Movement.

We encouraged everyone to do some research and learn the names of political prisoners who were organizers in the Black Panther Party, other Black Liberation organizations, the American Indian Movement, and other movements for freedom and justice.

Learn the names of those elders who have spent decades in prison, like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Jamil al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown), Ed Poindexter, Kenny “Zulu” Whitmore, Veronza Bowers Jr., Leonard Peltier, Alvaro Luna Hernandez, Byron Chubbuck (Oso Blanco), Kamau Sadiki, Rev. Joy Powell, longest-held U.S. political prisoner Ruchell Magee, and exiled liberation fighter Assata Shakur.

Justice in the hands of the people

Wolf, organizer with the San Diego BPP and chair of this gathering, welcomed everyone and spoke of the importance of supporting all political prisoners with emphasis today on Mumia Abu-Jamal. “They sacrificed their lives for us - now is the time for us to stand up and fight for their lives. We must not let our freedom fighters die in prison.”

Judge Lucretia Clemons’ recent denial of a new trial for Abu-Jamal to prove his innocence left organizers angry and full of all kinds of emotions aimed at the entire

U.S. criminal judicial system.

Some of us were confident that after 41 years, Mumia would finally get his day in court. But over and over we are reminded that justice has to be in the hands of the people. It is up to us to free Mumia. We need to go to the streets in the hundreds of thousands, in the millions.

Millions are needed in the U.S. to stand with Mumia and demand that he be released NOW!

Community solidarity

For now, we honor Mumia for his journalism, his commentaries, his support for humanity, his voice. We listened to a recorded update on his case from Johanna Fernandez and heard solidarity statements from representatives from local community organizations.

Sylvia Telefarro of African American Writers & Artists shared some inspiring words and a poem by Alice Walker. Curtis Howard, community organizer and author, spoke of his lived experience in the California prison system.

Roberto Papeda of the Chicano Prison Project read a letter he sent to Judge Clemons encouraging her to do the right thing. He also commented on how important it is to recognize and honor Mumia on his birthday by sending revolutionary love and birthday wishes.

Matsemela Odom, organizer with the African People's Socialist Party, spoke on how important it is to support Mumia and all political prisoners. Odom alerted everyone to the attack on the Uhuru Movement. Following FBI raids last year, three members of the APSP, including Chair Omali Yeshitela, [have been indicted](#). The attacks on the movement to liberate African people continue to this day.

We ended our celebration with everyone picking up one of Mumia's books for a group photo in front of the beautiful banner designed by local artist/activist Mario Torero. Participants signed a birthday card to be sent to Abu-Jamal on his birthday, April 24. The card and photo will add to the many birthday greetings Mumia will receive from his supporters nationally and internationally.

[Roberto Papeda's comment about recognizing and honoring prisoners on their birthdays reminded me of a commentary by Mumia that I heard long ago. I



downloaded it and shared the message on Youtube.]

Happy birthday Mumia! We love you!

