

# Leonard Peltier's 80th birthday statement released

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October 3, 2024



Photo: [Bill Hackwell](#)

October 2, 2024

Greetings All,

On this Wrongful Conviction Day, Leonard Peltier, the longest-serving Indigenous political prisoner, is incarcerated in lockdown-modified operations conditions at USP Coleman I, operated by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP).

Yet, in this moment of silence, Leonard speaks. To honor his birthday and all those who are unjustly convicted and incarcerated, the Leonard Peltier Official Ad Hoc Committee has released a video of Leonard Peltier that is going viral. Narrated by renowned scholar Ward Churchill and set to a video created by award-winning filmmaker Suzie Baer, the film most importantly centers Leonard's personal reflection on his 80th year.

Jenipher Jones, Mr. Peltier's lead counsel, commented, "This powerfully moving film captures the essence of who I know Leonard to be. I am grateful to Professor Churchill and Suzie Baer for their work and longstanding advocacy of Leonard. As the recent execution of Marcellus Williams-Imam Khaliifah Williams shows us, we as a society bear a responsibility to uplift the cases of all those who are wrongfully convicted and also hold the government accountable to do that for which it professes to exist. We must challenge our impulses of blind blood-thirst for guilt and the use of our legal systems to carry out this malignant pathology. There is absolutely no lawful justification for Leonard's incarceration."

"Leonard Peltier is Native elder whose wrongful incarceration is shameful. His continued imprisonment exemplifies the historical cruelty of the US Government toward Native people. The US BOP's treatment of Leonard Peltier is unlawful, and he deserves his freedom." - Suzie Baer

“Until Leonard Peltier breathes free air, we are all caged. When will this government commit one act of Justice? ” – Dawn Lawson

Below, please find Leonard’s Statement.

To view the film, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/Peltier80thPresentation>. We hope to have additional updates on Leonard soon. In the meantime, please engage our calls to action or donate to his defense efforts. Miigwech.

## **LEONARD PELTIER’S 80th BIRTHDAY STATEMENT 2024 ©**

Greetings my Friends, Loved Ones, Relatives, Supporters,

When I was a child, I looked to my Elders to learn how to live within Mother Earth’s rhythms.

I yearn to sit by the fire with my loved ones and have our children look to me to learn the mysteries of Mother Earth. I want to laugh, share the pipe, and gaze into the eyes of a woman who does not carry handcuffs.

I have become an Elder. I suppose, in many ways, I am still the nine-year-old who founded The Resistance among my peers at Wahpeton Boarding School, the young man willing to sacrifice everything to protect my people, and the young man who worked hard and played hard when the chance arose.

At the same time, I feel every second of these past eighty years wreaking havoc on my body.

I have been losing my eyesight, but my inner vision is not that of an old man. I long to get out there and work. My mind is filled with ideas to combat the greed and corruption that spread like a poisonous mold through the halls of those who govern us.

When I was sentenced, I stated:

“I do feel pity for your people that they must live under such a ugly system. Under your system you are taught greed, racism and corruption, and the most serious of all, the destruction of our mother earth. Under the native American system we are taught all people are brothers and sisters, to share the wealth with the poor and needy; but the most important of all is to respect and preserve the earth, to me considered to be our mother.”

I could not help but see far and wide. I saw the continued colonization and destruction of Mother Earth and the ongoing termination of an entire People.

I perceive more than most of you know, even in lockdown. I see spirit warriors stand up and speak out; it does my heart good.

I also see the erosion of laws meant to protect our very right to survive. Civil rights used to be a pretense. They were never a true thing. Now, I see that the government is not bothering to pretend.

We cannot continue to allow greed, racism, and corruption to rule us.

Remember, my people. Remember who you are. Mother Earth herself flows through our veins. We endure. The greed, corruption, and disdain of the colonizers will bring them to their ruin. They seek to ravish Mother Earth while chasing the almighty dollar.

We have survived their apocalypse. We are not simply enduring; we are destined to thrive.

The lockdowns have not been kind to my body. I am not going to stand here and cry over what happens to an eighty-year-old body held in lockdown for over four years. I will continue to plan, think, and change what is within my reach.

Hope is a hard thing, but I still hold hope. The parole denial was not unexpected. I will not say I was overjoyed with the outcome, but we knew. They may yet surprise us with the answer to the appeal Jenipher Jones and Moira Meltzer-Cohen filed.

Jenipher Jones has assured me from the start that she is fully committed to my case. I trust her word. Jenipher will fight for me and with me in court if the appeal is rejected.

My friends, I need you to fight for you.

Police are beating children in the streets. The Parole Commission still illegally holds many of us long past our release dates. The Supreme Court has made it impossible for people to challenge wrongful convictions.

Indigenous people are still being forced from our land – we protect Mother Earth. They have stripped her bare and now want our resources. Our people go missing at a staggering rate, and no one blinks.

We are awaiting the Uhuru verdict to determine whether free speech exists, a verdict that may well come down on my eightieth birthday.

And – I am still in prison.

The Constitution reads, “We, the People.”

We must tell those in power we ARE the people.

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This statement was meant to be released on my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I was in a ten-day lockdown, and my Board waited for me to approve the final edits.

I regret that no statement was released on my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I regret that this country has been taken by those who can cage human beings in conditions that would be illegal for dogs.

As I said, I need you to fight for you. I fight every day for my freedom with my legal team. I am now fighting for my life. They sentenced me to Death by Incarceration. They are trying hard to enforce that.

They have never managed to cage my Spirit. They never will. Do not allow anyone to cage yours.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse

Doksha,

Leonard Peltier

Source: [Free Leonard Peltier Now Committee](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2024/10/03/leonard-peltiers-80th-birthday-statement-released/)

