

# Mumia Abu-Jamal speaks to New York meeting

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
January 14, 2019



Pam Africa describes prison medical neglect of Mumia. Photo: Stephen Millies

New York — More than a hundred people came to the People’s Forum in Midtown Manhattan on Jan. 12 to hear the latest developments in the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

On the meeting’s stage were boxes that represented the six boxes with documents on Mumia’s case that were only recently “discovered” in the Philadelphia District Attorney’s office.

The meeting’s highlight was Mumia speaking from prison via telephone. The world

famous political prisoner discussed Judge Leon Tucker's ruling giving him the right to appeal because of judicial bias.

Former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Ronald Castille refused to recuse himself from hearing an appeal for Abu-Jamal despite having served as Philadelphia DA. Mumia pointed out that not only Castille, but also several other justices hearing his case, belonged to the super racist Fraternal Order of Police. What sort of justice is that?

Abu-Jamal denounced Donald Trump's war against im/migrants. Mumia pointed out that the Black survivors of the U.S. wars against the Seminole Nation found refuge in Mexico, where slavery had been abolished decades before the U.S. Civil War.

Pam Africa described how Mumia has suffered from painful medical neglect in prison, including the prison authorities' refusal to treat his hepatitis C condition. Yet Mumia continues to write and fight for the people, Pam Africa emphasized.

Other speakers included civil rights lawyer Robyn Spencer, Black Agenda Report executive editor Glen Ford and professor Johanna Fernández of the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home.



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# **Hundreds march in Philadelphia to support Mumia Abu-Jamal**

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“Brick by brick! Wall by wall! We’re gonna free Mumia Abu-Jamal!” hundreds of people chanted as they marched through a driving winter rainstorm in Philadelphia on Jan. 5.

They came to stand in solidarity with the Black political prisoner and revolutionary journalist known worldwide as “the voice of the voiceless.”

They came to demand that Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner respect Judge Leon Tucker’s Dec. 27 ruling that opens the way for a new appeal by Abu-Jamal of his 1982 conviction.

They came to show that the decadeslong people’s movement that saved Abu-Jamal’s life, that got him off death row and that won his right to life-saving hepatitis C treatment, would continue the fight until he is finally freed.

Struggle - La Lucha activists from Baltimore and New York and Baltimore People's Power Assembly members joined with International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Mobilization for Mumia, community members, trade unionists and prisoner advocates at an organizing meeting after the march.

These videos, shot by Struggle - La Lucha's Sharon Black, feature Pam Africa and the Rev. C.D. Witherspoon firing up the marchers.

<https://www.facebook.com/sharon.black.1650332/videos/10157085850359703/>

<https://www.facebook.com/sharon.black.1650332/videos/10157086210599703/>



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# **Protest for Mumia in Philadelphia on Jan. 5**

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**Be in Philadelphia**

**Krasner, don't stand in the way of  
justice for Mumia!**

**Saturday, January 5, 2019**

**Rally from 12 noon to 2 p.m. at District Attorney Larry  
Krasner's Office, 3 Penn. Sq. Across from Philadelphia City**

## Hall

Mumia Abu-Jamal won a significant case before Judge Leon Tucker in a decision announced on Dec. 27, granting Abu-Jamal new rights of appeal.

Abu-Jamal's supporters will rally to demand Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner not challenge this decision. Community activists will gather in front of the DA's office, 3 S. Penn Sq. across from City Hall, on Saturday, Jan. 5 at 12 noon.

Current DA Krasner should cease defending former Philadelphia DA and later PA Supreme Court Judge Ron Castille's now-discredited claim of impartiality. Furthermore, Krasner should not challenge Judge Tucker's decision and allow Abu-Jamal to go forward with re-arguing his appeals, which Judge Tucker states "would best serve the appearance of justice."

Pam Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal said, "The people's movement is responsible for this victory. A new appeal opens the door to Mumia's freedom - a new trial or dismissal of the charges."

Judge Tucker's ground breaking ruling could impact many other prisoners whose appeals were similarly denied.

Tucker ruled former Pa Supreme Court Justice Ronald Castille denied Abu-Jamal fair and impartial appeals by not recusing himself from the defendant's appeals from 1998-2012. The ruling referenced Castille's public statements of being a "law and order" prosecutor, responsible for 45 men on death row, the support of the Fraternal Order of Police and the new evidence of Castille's having singled out men convicted as "police killers". It all created the appearance of bias and impropriety in the appeal process.

Judge Tucker's ruling means that Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeals of his 1982 conviction, that he was framed by police and prosecution manufacturing evidence of guilt and

suppressing the proof of his innocence as well as other due process trial rights, are re-stored and must be re-heard in the PA appeals court.

Abu-Jamal has always maintained his innocence in the fatal shooting of police officer Daniel Faulkner. His prosecution was politically-motivated because of his Black Panther Party membership, his support of the MOVE organization and as a radical journalist. His trial was racially biased: trial judge Albert Sabo declared, "I'm gonna help them fry the n—r." and the prosecution excluded African Americans from the jury.

After 37 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit, the charges should be dismissed and he should be freed.



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# **Mumia Abu-Jamal case reopened as court ruling admits bias**

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World famous political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal won an opportunity to reopen his case when a Philadelphia Common Pleas Court judge ruled on Dec. 27 that his appeal can be reargued before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The appeal opens the possibility of a retrial where the racist frame-up of Mumia can be exposed.

Judge Leon Tucker found that “if a judge served as a prosecutor and then the judge, there is no separate analysis or determination required by the court, there is a finding of automatic bias and a due process violation.”

This ruling overturns a 2012 decision by Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille because of the racist bias he exhibited when acting as a prosecutor. Evidence includes racist campaign speeches and letters advocating the issuance of death warrants in cases where a police officer was killed. Despite a convincing body of evidence supporting Mumia’s claim of innocence, Castille’s ruling denied Mumia further appeals, condemning him to serve a life sentence without parole.

In the second part of Judge Tucker's ruling — made in a courtroom packed with police — Tucker said Abu-Jamal's lawyers failed to present evidence that Castille had a significant personal involvement in a critical decision over Abu-Jamal's case while Castille was district attorney. The judge did note that the evidence of Castille's bias in Mumia's case was missing because the state failed to produce two documents that it was obligated to preserve while Abu-Jamal's appeals were active.

Mumia was on death row from 1981 until 2008, when a U.S. appeals court threw out the death sentence because of flawed jury instructions. The appeals court was forced to respond to the worldwide campaign for freedom for Mumia. Protests focused on the racist U.S. courts and prison system. As an internationally renowned political prisoner and journalist, Mumia had become "the voice of the voiceless" and a symbol of injustice in the U.S. prison system.

Journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal had served as Black Panther Party minister of information and reported on racist Philadelphia police attacks — especially the attacks on the organization MOVE and the police bombing of the MOVE house in 1985, a terrorist act that flattened an entire neighborhood in the oppressed community of Philadelphia.

During four decades in prison, Mumia was celebrated for his writing on the U.S. system of injustice. He wrote about the racist bias he saw in the makeup of juries and the inequity of the number of people of color on death row. Despite his vulnerable position, Mumia has never flinched from protesting injustice wherever he has seen it, from Palestine to racist police brutality in the U.S. to President Trump's murderous persecution of im/migrants.

In recent years, Mumia suffered a life-threatening illness from hepatitis C. After angry protests led by supporters like Pam Africa, he was granted the right to receive a curative treatment. In a well-known display of courage, he would not accept the

lifesaving medicine until it became available for other prisoners too.

Now is the time to be in the street for Mumia. It is support for his courage that has kept his case in the forefront of the struggle against racism. It is possible now to build the kind of protests that will find resonance in the courts, to fight for justice that cannot be denied.

Stay tuned: [www.freemumia.com](http://www.freemumia.com) #FreeMumia



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# Political prisoner profile: Leonard Peltier

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On Feb. 6, 2019, Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier will mark the beginning of his 44th year in prison. Now 74, Peltier is Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) and Lakota from the Turtle Mountain Reservation and was framed up for the 1975 shooting of two FBI agents at Pine Ridge Reservation as part of the FBI's Cointelpro

actions to destroy the American Indian Movement.

Peltier was once the most famous U.S. political prisoner, with support from millions of people in the Soviet Union, South Africa, Ireland and elsewhere. Around the world, his supporters demanded that the courts grant him a new trial and petitioned president after president to grant him clemency. Now, Peltier's case is not as well known as it should be, largely because the U.S. mainstream media very rarely cover any political prisoners in a country that pretends it does not have any. It's time to change that!

### **FBI's Cointelpro targeted AIM warriors**

In the early 1970s, a corrupt tribal chairman named Dick Wilson created a period of political violence on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Dick Wilson hired groups of vigilantes, called GOONs (Guardians Of the Oglala Nation), who initiated what became known as the Reign of Terror on the reservation. Known traditional opponents of Wilson were stopped while driving on the reservation, pulled out of their cars or trucks and severely beaten.

Finally, the traditional people asked AIM to provide protection for the elders, women and children, and AIM occupied Wounded Knee in 1973 for 71 days, garnering worldwide solidarity and participation from many organizations and Indigenous nations.

Later, Leonard Peltier was among the AIM leaders who set up camps near family compounds to protect the people, and he and others were at the Jumping Bull compound in 1975. On June 26, two FBI agents in separate unmarked cars chased what they described as a red pickup truck onto the Jumping Bull compound with a highly suspect warrant for a young Lakota man accused of stealing an expensive pair of cowboy boots (not exactly on the level of a major crime). They did this even though they had been warned by tribal police not to enter the reservation.

No one knows how a shootout between the FBI agents and the occupants of the compound started, but Leonard and other campers heard gunshots being fired and went running up to protect the elders and children living on the compound. As the shooting went on, the two FBI agents were wounded, radioed for backup and then were killed. Unexplained to this day is what hundreds of federal law officials were doing in the vicinity of this isolated community, but within a short while they had the compound surrounded. One Indigenous defender, Joseph Stuntz, was killed by a federal sniper. His murder was never investigated, and no one was ever charged in his death. Leonard Peltier and the other AIM campers managed to escape from the encircled compound and fled the area.

It would later be revealed that Dick Wilson at that time signed over some of the sacred Black Hills area to the U.S. government for toxic uranium mining, mining that has created serious health issues on Pine Ridge.

Eventually Bob Robideau, Leonard Peltier and Dino Butler were charged with the murder of the two FBI agents. Robideau and Butler were initially tried by a federal jury in Iowa and acquitted on the grounds of self-defense, given the climate of fear on the Pine Ridge Reservation and that there was nothing to tie them to the shooting of the two agents.

Leonard had fled to Canada, fearing he would not receive a fair trial. He was arrested in Canada in February of 1976 and extradited to the U.S. based on false affidavits. Eventually, the truth came out that the Myrtle Poor Bear affidavit used by the U.S. was false, since Poor Bear had never met Leonard and had not been present on the day of the shootout. The FBI threatened that they would kill and mutilate her young daughter if she did not sign.

Peltier's trial was moved to North Dakota, where a conservative judge refused to allow the case for self-defense and most of the evidence of the Reign of Terror that had existed on the reservation. The FBI also lied about a ballistics test, claiming that

it tied Leonard to the weapon used to kill the two agents. In fact, the ballistics test said that the weapon in question had been too badly damaged in a car fire to be able to be tested. Over 140,000 pages of FBI evidence were withheld from Peltier's defense lawyers. Given the judicial and FBI misconduct and outright lies, Leonard was found guilty and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences.

During Leonard's ongoing appeals, the prosecuting attorney admitted that the government had no idea who had actually shot and killed the two agents, but that Leonard was guilty because he was present at the shootout, even though the government admitted that there were over 40 other Indigenous people present at the time.

### **Past time to free Leonard Peltier**

The federal courts have continually denied Leonard's appeals for a new trial while glossing over the misconduct and lying that occurred, The federal parole board has continuously denied parole to Leonard because he hasn't admitted guilt, and his appeals for clemency have been continuously ignored. In 2000, when President Clinton was considering a pardon for Peltier, FBI agents illegally marched in Washington in protest. Clinton left office without signing the request after previously stating that this case deserved serious definitive consideration, and President Obama and other presidents have also denied freedom to Peltier.

Leonard Peltier is now 74, in failing health with diabetes, high blood pressure and other serious health problems. It's way past time for Leonard to walk free and be able to spend his remaining days with his family.

Leonard is imprisoned in Florida, thousands of miles from his Indigenous homelands. He is an internationally noted artist and humanitarian organizer. You can write to him: Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, USP Coleman I, P.O. Box 1033, Coleman, FL 33521

**Updates on Leonard's case can be found at the website of the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee:** [www.whoisleonardpeltier.info](http://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info) There, you will find more information about his case and about what supporters are being asked to do. Please help to spread the word about Leonard Peltier!

Free Leonard Peltier, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the remaining members of the Move 9 and all political prisoners!

