

Resolution to Save the Life of Mumia Abu-Jamal from "Medical Neglect"

From the National Writers Union, August 11, 2015

Resolution to Save the Life of Mumia Abu-Jamal from "Medical Neglect"

Whereas Mumia Abu-Jamal, an African-American journalist and former member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, who was president of the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, was sentenced to the death penalty in 1982 for allegedly killing a white policeman. The judgment was based on fraudulent court proceedings, including an incompetent lawyer who neglected evidence showing Abu-Jamal's innocence, a nearly all-white jury (which studies show often produces the same result as an all-white jury with a Black defendant), self-serving witnesses, and a biased judge, which show that Abu-Jamal is an innocent man who should never have been in jail in the first place and who is a political prisoner in Pennsylvania;

Whereas the National Writers Union passed a resolution inviting the world-renowned Black author to accept an honorary membership in 1995. The resolution was passed when Abu-Jamal had received a date of execution;

Whereas the NWU has continued to support Abu-Jamal ever since, especially in 2011 when his death sentence was overturned and he was moved to general population;

Whereas the NWU became aware that Abu-Jamal suffered a medical emergency in March 2015 when he was on the verge of slipping into a diabetic coma and was suffering from a severe, debilitating, painful skin disease, which went undiagnosed and untreated for months by the State Correctional Institution of Mahanoy;

Whereas the NWU, like others who similarly support Abu-Jamal, believes that the Pennsylvania prison system is negligent and has not used reasonable care, reflecting "medical neglect" and violating his human and civil rights. The NWU supports all efforts in the ongoing struggle to secure specialists, a diagnosis, and a treatment regimen needed to restore Abu-Jamal to full health;

Whereas the Pennsylvania prison system must be required to use all due diligence and every option deemed appropriate in the treatment of and timely diagnosis of Abu-Jamal in order to avoid further medical neglect that might lead to his death;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the National Writers Union will write letters to (1) SCI Mahanoy, (2) the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, and (3) Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf demanding that these authorities comply with the highest standards of health care recommended by the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, and the Department of Justice and stop the medical neglect that threatens the life of Abu-Jamal. The National Writers Union calls for Abu-Jamal's release to the care of doctors and medical facilities of his choice so that he can get the treatment he is entitled to;

Be it further resolved that, given the extensive evidence of Abu-Jamal's innocence, wrongful incarceration, extreme undiagnosed illness after five months and the prison medical system's failure to diagnose or treat him properly, we add our voices to the international call for the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal;

Be it further resolved that the National Writers Union will set up a Mumia Abu-Jamal Watch Committee to monitor his health situation and suggest further support actions that may become necessary, which will be authorized by a vote of the delegates.

Responsible Parties: Committee for this resolution: Susan E. Davis, Yusef Salaam, Kenneth Heard, Irving Jones, and Jeanne Cosmos.

Contact Person: Susan E. Davis, 212-989-6756, sednyc@rcn.com.

Resolution Signers:

Susan E. Davis, New York Chapter

Yusef Salaam, New York Chapter

Jeanne Cosmos, Boston Chapter

Irving Jones, Philadelphia Chapter

Kenneth Heard, Philadelphia Chapter

Marivir Montebon, New York Chapter

Barbara Mende, Boston Chapter

Marilyn Grunwald, Southern California Chapter

Mike McCallister, At Large Chapter

Karen Ford, Chicago Chapter

Scott Urbanowski, Southeast Michigan Chapter

Fernando Gapasin, Oregon Chapter

Labarre Blackman, At Large Chapter

Keith Bagwell, Tucson Chapter

Sandra L. Campbell, At Large Chapter

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