



IM4M
International
Mobilization
4 Mumia

ICFFMAJ
International Concerned
Family and Friends
of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Journalist, Elder Mumia Abu-Jamal's Perpetual Detention Unjust, Human Rights Groups Appeal to United Nations

PRESS CONFERENCE

Tuesday October 13th, 2026

6:00PM - 8:00PM

Grace Congregation Church of Harlem

310 West 139th Street, New York 10030

SPEAKERS

MC: Sophia Williams

Rev. Dr. Nigel A. Pearce

Bret Grote, ALC Legal Director and Mumia Abu-Jamal's lead attorney

Mumia Abu-Jamal, expected to call in

Dr. Ricardo Alvarez, Abolitionist Physician and Mumia's medical consultant

Pastor Keith Collins, Abolitionist, Practitioner of Liberation Theology and Decolonization

Special Invited Guest: Mama Pam

Contact: Suzanne Ross (917) 584-2135, Sophia Williams (917) 806-0521

New York—For more than 44 years, U.S. citizen Mumia Abu-Jamal has been arbitrarily detained in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Today, the Abolitionist Law Center and a national coalition of other human rights organizations – American Civil Liberties Union, Center for Constitutional Rights, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, and Release Aging People in Prison Campaign – submitted a [petition to a United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#) seeking relief. The submission provides evidence of the state of Pennsylvania violating international standards by consistently denying Mr. Abu-Jamal a fair trial and appellate process, by applying torturous conditions of confinement, and condemning him to a death by incarceration sentence that prevents him from ever leaving prison alive.

Mr. Abu-Jamal, a 72-year-old award-winning broadcast journalist and prolific author, has been incarcerated for more than four decades, since December 1981. He was arrested and charged with murdering a police officer after being found at the scene, also shot. After being convicted and given the death penalty, he was held in solitary confinement on death row (1983-2011) for 29 years, a gross violation of the international Mandela Rules limiting solitary confinement to 15 days. Throughout, Mr.

Abu-Jamal has been targeted for his political expression, associations, and his race—prior to his arrest, at trial, and over the course of his incarceration, appeals, and postconviction proceedings, including repeated attempts to censor and silence his political writings and speech.

“Mumia’s case exemplifies the racism endemic to the criminal punishment system in Philadelphia in the 1970s and 1980s, and the use of incarceration as a tool of political repression,” said Saleem Holbrook, Executive Director of the Abolitionist Law Center, the public interest law firm that represents him. Police, prosecutorial and judicial misconduct plagued his conviction. Mr. Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial, according to Amnesty International, “failed to meet minimum international standards safeguarding the fairness of legal proceedings.”

The UN submission clearly documents the racial discrimination Mr. Abu-Jamal has been subject to along with deprivation of his right to represent himself, deprivation of adequate time and facilities to mount a proper defense, and political interference.

“At every step, the case against Mumia violated fundamental legal principles. He would be free if courts applied the law to his case instead of playing politics with the Constitution,” said **Abolitionist Law Center Legal Director Bret Grote**. “We are seeking a ruling from the United Nations that exposes the bias, racism, and cruelty of the judicial system in Mumia’s case.”

Mr. Abu-Jamal has diligently pursued a new and fair trial through appellate and post-conviction proceedings in both state and federal court, but has exhausted all legal avenues for relief. Though his death penalty was overturned, Mr. Abu-Jamal’s sentence of life without parole – also known as death by incarceration (DBI) – is torture: a cruel, inhumane, and degrading punishment that violates international law.

“The inherent arbitrariness of an indefinite DBI sentence, which allows no periodic review of continuing need or reasonableness, in combination with Mr. Abu-Jamal’s many years served to date, advanced age, declining health, and lack of risk to the public violates multiple provisions of international law,” said Samah Sisay, Staff Attorney at Center of Constitutional Rights.

Now an elderly man, Mr. Abu-Jamal has endured multiple near-death medical crises, including hepatitis C, congestive heart failure, a preventable hyperglycemic emergency that threatened his life, and multiple ophthalmic conditions that, due to inadequate medical care by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, pose a significant risk of permanent blindness.

As the submission states, Mr. Abu-Jamal is one of a staggering number of individuals in the United States condemned to die in prison. As of 2020, more than 200,000 people in the United States were serving life or virtual life sentences, of whom nearly 8,300 were in Pennsylvania; more than 56,000 people in the U.S. are serving formal sentences of life without parole, of whom more than 5,000 are in PA. Black people comprise only about 1 in 9 of incarcerated people in PA, but 2/3 of those serving life sentences. A growing consensus of international authorities has condemned DBI sentencing in the U.S. as violating international prohibitions on racial discrimination. In November 2023, the United Nations Human Rights Committee recommended that the United States “establish a moratorium on the imposition of sentences to life imprisonment without parole.”

The July 28 submission to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention can be found at alcenter.org.