

**Statement From U.S. Political Prisoners
to Nelson Mandela,
Deputy Vice President of the African
National Congress
June 21, 1990
Harlem, New York**

**Presented by
Dhoruba Bin Wahad
U.S. Political Prisoner
June 5, 1971 - March 22, 1990**

Historically, the governments of the United States and South Africa have dealt with political dissent and radical resistance to institutionalized racism in much the same manner. Under the pretense of maintaining "law and order," the U.S. and South Africa criminalize radical and progressive movements for social and political change. Here in the U.S., our movement was brutally and viciously destroyed. Our leaders were murdered, forced into exile or imprisoned.

In both the U.S. and South Africa there are hundreds of political prisoners within the bowels of their prisons. And yet the U.S. and South Africa boldly deny the existence of these freedom fighters to the world. Instead they claim these peoples' ~~sheroes~~ and heroes are criminals.

In both the U.S. and South Africa, white skin privilege is the rule. The needs and humanity of poor people of color are for the most part ignored and denied. In South Africa racism is codified, reduced to a system of law. In the U.S. racism is more subtle and hypocritical: the odor of phony demoratic idealism masks the foul stench of a racist, eurocentric system that dehumanizes us, imprisons our youth, marginalizes our women and tramples our most basic humanity.

As a former political prisoner, Comrade Mandela, you surely know what it means to be defined as a "terrorist" by a state that refuses to deal with the right of oppressed people of color to defend themselves against the racist violence, injustice and terrorism of the State. The very individuals and governments who hail you today as a "freedom fighter" in the past supported efforts to kill and imprison

you. These same hypocrites defined the A.N.C. as a terrorist organization. The same white media that now hangs on your every word just a moment ago in history supported "constructive engagement" with the racist apartheid regime. This same white media has consistently distorted and stifled the righteous cause of the South African people.

Brother Nelson, I was incarcerated for twenty years for my political views and activities on behalf of the African-American community. Today there are over 100 political prisoners in the U.S. suffering under some of the most repressive conditions imaginable. Many of my comrades in the African-American liberation movement have been murdered by agents of the U.S. government, our families have been destroyed and our organizations decimated. But one day the African-American community will again have its own Intifada, its own peoples' uprising.

Today, U.S. political prisoners have no voice, they remain invisible. The A.N.C. and the anti-apartheid forces in South Africa have always kept the names and faces of your political prisoners in public view. We should learn from your example. We must not forget those who have sacrificed on our behalf. Brother Mandela I stand before you on their behalf, so that they may be heard. There's an African proverb which says if you speak the name of an ancestor they live again. Let us speak the name of our freedom fighters that they may be free again. Free Geronimo! Free Bashir! Free Nuh! Free Herman! Free Abdul! Free Mumia! Free Leonard Peltier! Free Marilyn Buck! Free Jalil! Free Robert Seth Hayes! Free Ahmed Rahman! Free

Sundiata! Free Sekou Odinga! Free David Rice! Free Kazi Toure!
Free Hanif Shabazz Bey! Free ^{Alejandra}~~Alejandra~~ Torres!

Our hearts and souls are with you and the freedom loving people of South Africa. It's been said that there are no strangers in the struggle for freedom, only comrades that never met. African-American political prisoners of the United States share a human experience with you that few who have not undergone long periods of imprisonment, isolation and torture for their political principles can understand. We are one in struggle! Power to the people!
Amandla!

This statement was presented with the formal approval of:

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~~James~~ Ji Jaga Pratt

Bashir Hameed (James Dixon York)

Abdul Majid (Anthony LaBorde)

Albert Nuh Washington

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Herman Bell

Teddy Jah Heath

Robert Seth Hayes

Ahmed Abdul Rahman

Sundiata Acoli

Sekou Mgobogi Abdullah Odinga

David Rice

Kazi Toure

Henif Shabazz Bey

(There are dozens of other African American Political Prisoners whose names do not appear above, just as there are Puerto Rican prisoners of war, Native American political prisoners, and North American political prisoners who are not listed. We are certain that all share the political sentiment expressed in this statement.)