



## **European Alliance for the Self Determination of Indigenous Peoples**

Mister  
Joseph Biden  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington  
DC 20500, USA

January 31, 2022

### **Urgent Appeal: Executive Clemency for Leonard Peltier, Ojibway-Dakota Sioux**

Mister President

With this letter we, as European human rights organizations, want to appeal to you to grant executive clemency to the 77-year-old indigenous prisoner Leonard Peltier (#89637-132, USP Coleman 1, FL) who has been imprisoned for 46 years, and thus to end the incomprehensible martyrdom of this old and seriously ill man.

Our organization, the EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, is a coalition of 7 human rights associations from 4 European countries, all of which have been working on indigenous issues in the Americas for decades. This includes decades of involvement with the case of Leonard Peltier. The undersigned of this letter has been researching this case and its background for a quarter of a century. In addition to extensive file review and reading, he has conducted numerous interviews with local and contemporary witnesses, reservation residents, Peltier's family members and with the two former co-defendants, but also police officers. He is the editor and author of a detailed book documentation on the case.

***February 6, 2022, marks the beginning of Leonard Peltier's 47th year in custody. For the last 36 hours, however, his imprisonment has become a matter of life and death, because Peltier has been infected with Covid-19. His poor state of health, which has always been insufficiently considered in detention, puts him in immediate danger of death.***

This case is about the shooting of an indigenous man and two FBI agents on indigenous land in South Dakota in 1975. It represents the terrible culmination of a violent confrontation between indigenous communities seeking justice and a corrupt local government backed by Washington in which over 60 Indigenous persons had lost their lives. Not only Leonard Peltier himself has always claimed not to be guilty of the death of the two FBI agents, Jack Coler and Ronald Williams, but in July 2021 even James H. Reynolds, former United States Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa, who supervised the post-trial sentencing and appeals of Peltier's case, has asked you to release Peltier, admitting that he was wrong, and that history has shown how unjustly the U.S. has treated Indigenous Peoples.

Peltier's 1976 arrest in Canada, his extradition to the United States, and his 1977 conviction were based on evidence and an indictment that would not withstand any substantial legal analysis today. For these very reasons, the two separately indicted suspects, Bob Robideau and Dino Butler, were acquitted by a U.S. court. In Europe, Peltier would have been acquitted in *dubio pro reo* or in *dubio pro libertate*.

Not only are many people around the world convinced of Peltier's innocence, but so are many legal experts in the USA. Among others, the former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, many U.S. Members of Congress, but also Amnesty International USA and well-known personalities and politicians worldwide. Numerous justice officials, police officers and FBI agents expressed similar views after a presidential pardon for Peltier was rejected by both outgoing Presidents Clinton and Obama in 2000 and 2017.

We also recall here the relevant resolutions of the European Parliament in 1994 and 1999 and the initiative of Pope Francis to release Leonard Peltier from prison. Never has there been such a long-lasting and worldwide effort for the freedom of a prisoner. Two prominent advocates of Peltier's freedom have just passed away in the person of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu and European Parliament President David Sassoli.

*Mr. President, how can it be that all the pleas from all over the world and even from the former prosecutor are not heard? How can it be that the considerable doubts and evident criticisms regarding the validity of the prosecution's construction have not been taken into account and Peltier's exculpatory statements, documents and evidence have not been admitted in court? How can this be understood by the community of states, organizations, and people, which places the highest priority on democracy and human rights?*


What's more, for many years the prisoner has been regarded as a so-called model prisoner, which means that he has received a time bonus for good behavior that should have led to his earlier release. Yet, Leonard Peltier, who is only two years younger than yourself, will turn seventy-eight in 2022. Is a prison really the appropriate place for people of that age? Peltier's long-standing poor health has deteriorated considerably in recent years due to additional illnesses. **Hence, the current covid-19 infection is an imminent threat of death.**

We know that your country also offers the possibility of releasing particularly vulnerable persons (groups) from prison. In the case of Peltier in May 2020, not only the current Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland has spoken out in favor of such a solution, but currently also numerous members of Congress as well as the longest-serving senator in the USA, Mr. Patrick Leahy.

Mr. President, it is now in your hands to remove this stain from the history of American justice. You have it in your hands that Leonard Peltier can spend the remaining time of his life in the circle of his family and in his homeland. It is in your hands to set a sign for justice and humanity and thus also to give the Native American peoples an urgently needed sign – after more than 500 years of injustice.

Please show compassion and courage and grant executive clemency to Leonard Peltier. Please do it now, as he is in the greatest danger of his life.

Yours,  
for the European Alliance for the Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples



Dr. Michael Koch  
Executive Director  
Tokata-LPSG RheinMain e. V.  
Association for the support of indigenous social, cultural, environmental and human rights projects & Leonard Peltier Support Group/Germany



## **European Alliance for the Self Determination of Indigenous Peoples**

Aktionsgruppe Indianer & Menschenrechte (AGIM), Munich, Germany; [www.aktionsgruppe.de](http://www.aktionsgruppe.de)

Arbeitskreis Indianer Nordamerikas (AKIN), Vienna, Austria; [www.arbeitskreis-indianer.at](http://www.arbeitskreis-indianer.at)

Comité de Solidarité avec les Indiens des Amériques (CSIA-NITASSINAN), Paris, France;  
[www.csia-nitassinan.org](http://www.csia-nitassinan.org)

Internationales Komitee für die Indigenen Völker (Incomindios), Zurich, Switzerland;  
[www.incomindios.ch](http://www.incomindios.ch)

MENSCHENRECHTE 3000 e.V. (HUMAN RIGHTS 3000), Freiburg, Germany;  
[www.menschenrechte3000.de](http://www.menschenrechte3000.de)

Tokata-LPSG RheinMain e.V., Seligenstadt, Germany; [www.leonardpeltier.de](http://www.leonardpeltier.de)

Verein zur Unterstützung nordamerikanischer Indianer (ASNAI), Berlin, Germany; [www.asnai.de](http://www.asnai.de)

### **Copies to:**

- Vice President Mrs. Kamala Harris
- Secretary of Interior Mrs. Deb Haaland
- Attorney General Mr. Merrick Garland
- Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons Mr. Michael Carvajal
- Southeast Regional Director Federal Bureau of Prisons Mr. J.A. Keller
- Francisco Calí Tsay, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- U.S. Embassy in Germany, Austria, France and Switzerland
- The Embassy of Germany, Austria, France and Switzerland in the U.S.