



INTERNATIONAL LEONARD PELTIER DEFENSE COMMITTEE

Elder Political Prisoner Leonard Peltier contracts Covid 19 at USP Coleman 1 as BOP fails to follow CDC Covid Guidelines. ILPDC Calls for Covid Release for Leonard Peltier

IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 31, 2022

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(COLEMAN, FL) On Friday January 28, 2022, Leonard Peltier tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid 19) virus at the United States Penitentiary at Coleman, FL (USP Coleman 1).

Leonard Peltier (Anishinaabe/Dakota) of the American Indian Movement (AIM) is an internationally known political prisoner whose release has been called for by scores of Congressional representatives, the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and hundreds of luminaries as well as millions of people around the globe. Recently Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), Chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, and Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, joined those calls for Presidential Clemency/Commutation of Sentence for Leonard Peltier.

Leonard Peltier was unjustly convicted in the deaths of two FBI agents in a June 26, 1975, shootout in Oglala, SD between members of the American Indian Movement, defending the Oglala community and the FBI. Peltier's two co-defendants were acquitted by reason of self-defense. Peltier, who was later extradited from Canada with false evidence manufactured by the FBI, was tried separately. Peltier's trial was replete with prosecutorial misconduct, falsified testimony, fabricated evidence; even the autopsy presented to the jury was done by an examiner who had never seen the bodies of the two agents. The former US Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa, James Reynolds, who supervised the post-trial sentencing and appeals, admitted the prosecution "shaved a few corners." In a recent letter to President Joseph Biden calling for Peltier's release, he wrote: "We could not prove Leonard Peltier personally committed any crime on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Peltier is a 77-year-old inmate with a host of co-morbidities that should, according to CDC Guidelines, have prioritized him for a Covid Booster Shot. CDC guidelines call for booster shots at seven months, yet 11 months after Peltier received his Covid 19 vaccine, he had not received a booster shot. Visitors to USP Coleman 1, have noted guards and staff both without masks and improperly wearing masks; social distancing was neither encouraged nor enforced; and booster shots had not, until recently, been available to any inmate at USP Coleman 1. Offers by both the ILPDC and mutual aid organizations to donate N-95 masks for every inmate at Coleman were rejected.

On March 26 and April 3, 2020 the United States Department of Justice, through Attorney General Merrick Garland, issued guidelines for Covid Release to Home Confinement for inmates who were elderly and or had a compromised immune system or co-morbidities that put their health at further risk. Leonard Peltier at 77 years old, with a host of co-morbidities including diabetes, hypertension, heart condition, and an aortic aneurysm, undeniably meets those conditions. Furthermore, his home community on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota continues to request his return.

Now the reckless disregard of the United States Bureau of Prisons, in failing to follow CDC Guidelines for Correctional and Detention Facilities ([Correctional and Detention Facilities | CDC](#)), has caused Mr. Peltier to face a virus that could end his life.

The ILPDC is calling upon the United States Bureau of Prisons to follow the guidance provided by the US Justice Department and release Leonard Peltier on home confinement to the Turtle Mountain Reservation. The ILPDC believes, as former US Attorney James Reynolds wrote to US President Joe Biden, enough is enough. Leonard has suffered in prison for 46 years and now, due to the administrative inaction of USP Coleman, has caught a deadly virus.

The ILPDC calls upon our family, relatives, friends, and supporters around the world not only to pray for Leonard's health but to also take action. Request your members of Congress call upon the Warden at USP Coleman 1 and Bureau of Prisons Director Michal Carvajal, urging IMMEDIATE release of Leonard Peltier to home confinement. There is no question that his relatives at Turtle Mountain will provide the medical attention he needs with due care, rather than the wanton indifference that Leonard and prisoners throughout the federal system have been shown at USP Coleman, leading to rampant exposure and unnecessary deaths during the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. Compassionate and Covid Release should be implemented for all eligible federal prisoners, in accordance with law.

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