

National Jericho Movement Conference Held in Omaha Ashford Files Brief For Mondo

By Linda Kennedy

(Omaha, NE) It's now a waiting game for Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa and his attorney Timothy L. Ashford. Mr. Ashford has filed a brief with the Nebraska State Supreme Court for ineffective assistance of counsel on behalf of Mr. we Langa (né David Rice) who is one of the "Omaha 2." He and Ed Poindexter, former members of the Omaha Chapter of the Black Panther Party, were convicted in the 1971 suitcase bombing death of an Omaha police officer.

The brief comes on the heels of the National Jericho Conference which convened in Omaha. Long considered political prisoners and victims of J. Edgar Hoover's illegal counter intelligence program, COINTELPRO, which spied on and framed innocent American citizens, Mr. we Langa and Mr. Poindexter have been in prison nearly 44 years.

The Jericho Movement works to free political prisoners and is a staunch supporter of the "Omaha 2."

Mr. Ashford has been Mr. we Langa's attorney for 15 years. His suit alleges that prior attorneys were incompetent-that mistakes were made in the original trial and in subsequent appeals in 1972 and 1983.

In addition, "...the Attorney General is a judge on the Pardon's Board and he is a prosecutor in the Court of Appeals. That is a conflict of interest." The Court has 30 days to respond to Mr. Ashford's appeal.

"These people have been rendered invisible by the U.S. government," said New York Jericho member, DeQui Kioni-Sadiki, who is married to incarcerated former Black Panther Party member Sekou Odinga. "When you meet our political prisoners, our prisoners of war, it changes what we think we know about the United States government. We think we are free because we can walk around and choose what we eat or where we go with relative ease." But for the Black Panthers freedom meant more than that. "If you have ever gotten a free breakfast, free lunch, gone to a free clinic...any and all of these social programs you think the government started, are in fact, the legacy of the Black Panther Party." "If you say you love freedom. If you speak of Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Nat Turner, Malcolm X, Leonard Peltier, Ed Poindexter, or Mondo we Langa, you must defend those people who defended us. Ms. Kioni-Sadiki says our political prisoners fought for human rights. They are not criminals, "...they are freedom fighters who are criminalized."

International Review of U.S. Government Racial Discrimination August 13 -14 in Geneva, Switzerland

In one of two keynote addresses, U.S. Human Rights Network (USHRN) activist Efia Nwangaza, says the United States falsely portrays itself as the world's gold standard for human rights. The USHRN, an independent body of large and small grassroots groups which includes the NAACP

and the ACLU, submitted a progress report to the U.N. Human Rights Committee detailing the U.S. government's record on human rights. That shadow report was submitted to along with one from the U.S. in June. The reports are filed periodically to monitor U.S. progress toward complying with the International Convention to End all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), a treaty adopted by the United Nations in 1965. The U.S. government ICERD periodic review will be in Geneva Switzerland next month. Ms. Nwangaza will attend. The Human Rights Network report asks that the U.S. find an alternative method of dealing with political prisoners from the Civil Rights Era. It seeks the release of all political prisoners held in the United States and requests a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission be created to resolve all issues relating to COINTELPRO imprisoned civil right activists. In addition, USHRN wants the U.S. to grant full access of all jails, prisons, and detention centers in the United States to a UN investigator (Special Rapporteur Juan Mendez). The U.N. Human Rights Committee will review the reports and requests and make recommendations to the U.S. by mid September about what it must do to achieve compliance with the treaty.

Jericho National Co-Chair, Jihad Abdulmumit said Jericho will continue to, “..make connections with other organizations to work against mass incarcerations, wrongs within the prison system, and the treatment of Muslims since 9/11. “Things have changed since the 60's. What was illegal then is legal now. Instead of our patriotic duty, dissent is a criminal act. Revelations from the NSA scandal, Homeland Security, and the Patriot Act are prime examples. Mr. Abdulmumit believes Black people have become apathetic. “Culture is a weapon. It can be used for us or against us. We can use it for our freedom or we can succumb to the capitalistic, racist, materialistic culture forced on us daily by mass media.” African Americans have allowed the media to shape our reality. We watch too much (more than any other ethnic group in the U.S.) and read too little. “Jericho seeks to change that; we need your help.”

Jericho's first Human Rights Award was presented to New York member Anne Lamb for her outstanding work in defense of political prisoners and POWs in the Jericho Movement and the International Community.

U.S. Justice System is Criminal

Keynote speaker Dr. Viviane Saleh-hanna compared the prison system to slavery. “The modern day manifestation of slavery is the criminal justice system. The so-called justice system is criminal.” A University of Massachusetts Associate Professor in the Department of Crime and Justice Studies, Dr. Saleh-hanna says taking slaves is akin to arrest. It tears families apart just as slavery did. The auction block of slavery has become the modern day plea bargaining--arguing for people's lives. The slave dungeons were compared to prisons. Slaveholders had punishment cells to separate freedom fighters. That was solitary confinement. The person in charge of the fort was called the “warden.” They encouraged captives to snitch on each other. Shackles chained captives so they could move them much the same as today. “Captives were terrorized into a state of submission. The prison system of today is the legacy of the prison system of slavery.”

Nineteen members of the Black Panther Party are in prison today. Collectively they have been

incarcerated for 800 years. In the last year, four have been released. Herman Wallace was released October 4, 2013 and passed away four days later. He was freed after 41 years, most of it spent in solitary confinement.

Lynne Stewart was released from Carswell Federal Women's Medical Center in Texas on December 31, 2013.

Marshall Eddie Conway was released from the Maryland system on March 4, 2014 after 44 years in prison.

Sekau Kambui a/k/a William J. Turk was granted parole in June by the Bibb County Correctional facility in Brent, Alabama.

“Collectively we have to regain our strength, our psyche and part of that is to free our soldiers. We cannot abandon or own. We cannot make excuses for ourselves. Bullets are waiting for our young--from white racism or Black ignorance.” Jericho National Co-Chair, Jihad Abdumumit.

For more information on the Jericho Movement: www.thejerichomovement.com

U.S. Human Rights Network: <http://www.ushrnetwork.org/icerd-project>

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