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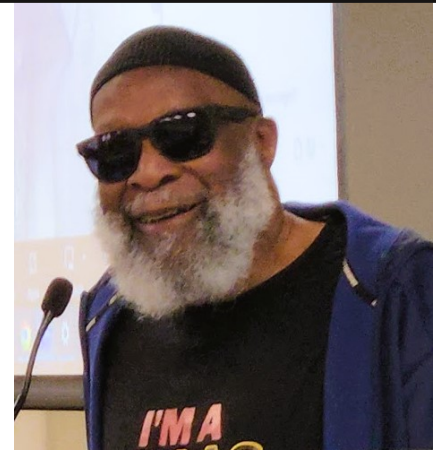
Published Quarterly

Combatting the Genocide Against Black, Brown, and Indigenous Peoples

[Spiritofmandela.org/peoples-senate](http://Spiritofmandela.org/peoples-senate)

## Our Beloved Baba Sekou

by Jihad Abdulmumit and Matt Meyer



Sekou Odinga passed away on January 12. Our hearts are shattered but we find sustenance in the fact that, as it says in the *Qur'an*: “*Innallahi wa Innallahi raji’un*: Verily we belong to Allah and verily to Him do we return.”

The Spirit of Mandela (SofM) coalition is a diverse, multifaith, primarily secular body, but we opened the October 2021 International Tribunal at the old Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, now the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center, with Muslim prayers led by Baba Sekou. Like Minister Malcolm whom he met and admired from his youth—joining his Organization of Afro-American Unity rooted in the Pan-African continent-based Organization of African Unity—Baba Sekou was a devout Muslim.

SofM is a Black liberation-led coalition with Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples at the center. Baba Sekou was more than just a founding and active-till-the-end member of our Coordinating Committee; he was a true elder, leader,

strategist, fundraiser, mediator, and militant—not simply because of his distinctive pedigree as a founder of the NYC chapter of the Black Panther Party, a founder of the Black Panther Party International Section in Algeria (meeting with national liberation movement leaders from all across the globe, including Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat), and a member of the Panther 21. Baba Sekou was our leader simply because of the manner of his being. He led by example, working as hard or harder than anyone else despite his having a few years on many of us, holding himself up to extraordinarily high expectations that he wanted us all (generously not by simply imposing his authority) to uphold and be accountable to. He inspired us to build the SofM coalition and the Peoples’ Senate, inquiring as to how he could take on more work and pushing us to be more strategic, more effective.

*(Continued on page 3)*



Spirit of  
Mandela

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**The Peoples' Senate project** is inspired by the work of the **Spirit of Mandela Coalition** and the October 2021 **International Tribunal** at which a distinguished panel of international jurists found the US to be still “Guilty of Genocide” against Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities.

The **five specific counts** of the indictment were for crimes related to:

- Police racism and violence
- Mass incarceration
- Political prisoners and prisoners of war
- Environmental racism
- Public health care inequities

For more information, visit [spiritofmandela.org/tribunal](https://spiritofmandela.org/tribunal).

*Please share the Peoples' Senate Newsletter with your organization  
and circulate it widely to your friends and comrades.*

The goal of this publication is to be an organizing tool to aid in building the Peoples' Senate and other kinds of coalitions or projects on a national, regional, and local level. We are projecting a quarterly publication schedule. We invite members and supporters of the Peoples' Senate to submit articles (with photos if possible), poetry, artwork, letters, thoughts, etc., to help establish a clearer understanding of the organizing being done in particular regions, strengthen our coalitions and our resolve to struggle against genocide, and strategize about next steps. Please email your submissions to:

[PSNewsletter@spiritofmandela.org](mailto:PSNewsletter@spiritofmandela.org).

*Peoples' Senate Newsletter* editorial committee: Ashaki Binta, Steve Bloom, Kathleen Chandler, Sophia Williams. Proofreading: Betsy Mickel

*(Sekou Odinga continued from page 1)*

Baba Sekou was a disciplined soldier and ultimately our General, not only because he was a member of the Black Liberation Army, hunted by the Amerikkkan empire for many of his acts above ground and in clandestinity, including the escape of Sister Assata Shakur. He was a political prisoner/prisoner of war for over 33 years, experiencing some of the worst torture in some of the empire's most draconian dungeons and never wavering, never breaking, never giving up the fight. We were called to follow him not just because of this rich history, but because it seemed joyous, rational, almost infectious to follow someone so loving, so positive, so encouraging, so strong.



Sekou with Spirit of Mandela  
Coordinating Committee, October 2021.

The SofM is Black-led but also multitendency, with many different approaches to what national, international, collective, and individual liberation might look like. But it is no coincidence that Baba Sekou was a devoted member of the New Afrikan Independence Movement. For him, the phrase “Free the Land” was much more than just a rhetorical device. Many of us sat by his side as he enthusiastically chatted with young folks, always bringing the conversation around to what their thoughts were about land and power, about the connections between our liberation and the land and territories we inhabit. Baba Sekou also loved folks of every race, ethnicity, religion, creed, and orientation—including so many people in his “familia” that we always felt both privileged but also comfortable just being at his expansive and inclusive table. He was the truest of internationalists, in theory and practice every day.

Baba Sekou was a dedicated and deeply-in-love husband, a father, grandfather, and great-grandfather . . . and our hearts and minds extend a special bow, with blessings and love and solidarity to all of them and to his dearly beloved, our SofM comrade,



Closing speaker at Texas People's Tribunal, May 2023.

Sister/Queen dequi kioni-sadiki. Sister dequi herself is so much more than a dedicated wife. In our estimate her organizing prowess is one of the major reasons that Baba Sekou was able to spend the last decade of his life on this side of the wall, overjoyed at being able to work for and greet his brothers Sundiata and Jalil, David and Mutulu, and others as they walked out of the dungeons. Sister dequi remains a key strategist, speaker, author, and SofM leader, and we offer her whatever she needs in this time of grief and healing. Like (and with) Sister dequi, Baba Sekou was more about actions than words, but we feel blessed that he and they did put to paper a number of important essays, interviews, and analysis—not mainly about the past but about how we can learn some lessons to build for a better future. Baba Sekou was a man, raised with all the baggage that men in this society grow up with. But he was a man consistently and frankly concerned about machismo, sexism, and supporting the leadership of women—a political as well as personal model for all men to aspire to.

Once out of prison, Baba Sekou hit the ground running, quickly forming with others the Northeast Political Prisoner Coalition (NEPPC). Along with all of the above, Sekou was an organizer and a peacemaker, seeking to fine-tune the tactical necessities of the moment as well as unite all people willing to come together in these urgent times. NEPPC filled a void in New York City and the region at the time, and also worked alongside other political prisoner groups (including the National Jericho Movement,

*(Continued on page 12)*



From left:  
Donald "DC" Cox,  
Sekou Odinga,  
Yassir Arafat,  
Eldridge Cleaver.



# Spirit of Mandela Coordinating Committee Gathers in Puerto Rico to Promote Anti-Colonialism Agenda

by Matt Meyer



From left: Jihad Abdulmumit, Aisha Mohammad, Ashaki Binta, Jalil Muntaqim, Matt Meyer, tag harmon.

From 21-25 September 2023, in a historic gathering, former US political prisoners and their allies, Peoples' Senate organizers, and Puerto Rican community leaders gathered to participate in meetings, demonstrations, and educational events throughout the still-colonized island nation of Puerto Rico.



Coordinated by the Spirit of Mandela Coalition, the National Jericho Movement, and the Occupied People's Forum—in conjunction with Puerto Rico's Casa/Museo Filiberto Ojeda Ríos and the Oscar López Rivera Foundation—the weekend of activities included full participation in the annual Grito de Lares mobilization, commemorating Puerto Rico's brief independence "shout" from Spain before the US Marines took over the country in 1898.

Puerto Rican independence activist and former political prisoner Luis Rosa Pérez, co-coordinator of the gathering, led participants to ceremonial Indigenous Taíno sites, to the leading environmentalist community of Casa Pueblo in Adjuntas, and to the town of Jayuya where a new generation of militants under the leadership of Don Pedro Albizu Campos began a series of militant actions birthing the modern independence movements—from Lolita Lebrón to Oscar López Rivera. An extremely moving part of the visit was time at the Hormigueros home, where escaped patriot Filiberto Ojeda Ríos of the Macheteros was living clandestinely and was ultimately killed in 2005 by the FBI.

Oscar López Rivera himself was part of the weekend's closing activities, which also included time at the Puerto Rican Bar Association where 2021 International Tribunal jurist, Deputy President Wilma E. Reverón Collazo spoke passionately about the deep connections between the Puerto Rican and Black liberation movements. Other Puerto Rican leaders

involved included former political prisoners/pows Dylcia Pagan, Adolfo Matos, Edwin Cortes, and Felix Rosa; Casa Filiberto Ojeda Ríos Museum organizers Damaris and Raquela; and Casa Pueblo co-founder Alexis Massol; Puerto Rico Campaign for Human Rights leaders Rita Zengotita and Carlos Nieves. Delegation participants included Spirit of Mandela Coordinating Committee members Jihad Abdulmumit, Ashaki Binta, tag harmon, Matt Meyer, Aisha Mohammad, and Jalil Muntaqim, as well as former political prisoner Kazi Toure, former SofM CC member Emok Quint (making a connection with her native Indigenous peoples of Guam), Leonard Peltier representative Paulette D'auteuil, and many others. As a regional build-up for Peoples' Senate work outside of the 50-state US territory, and as a coming together of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, the September gathering was a vital step forward for the building of our coalitions and movements. ■



Jihad Abdulmumit and Oscar López Rivera.



# Peoples' Senate Midwest Launches with Community Forum in Detroit

by Julius Theophilus II

[The author is a member of Detroit Jericho and the Michigan General Defense Committee.]

On November 2, 2023, Jalil Muntaqim was invited to Alkebu-Lan Village in Detroit, Michigan, to speak on building the Peoples' Senate.

The Peoples' Senate derives from the 2021 International Tribunal, which found the US guilty of five major human rights abuses against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples. (See box on page 2.)

Jalil explained that the Peoples' Senate is projected as an alternative way of governing, as opposed to the current form of governing under capitalism, which creates and perpetuates ongoing human rights violations and genocidal conditions. The Senate will be a network/coalition, linking the many vital organizing efforts across the country, and will unite and strengthen our collective voice and work.

Jalil gave a historical analysis of the "Doctrine of Discovery," the "Monroe Doctrine," and American exceptionalism. He explained that the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the US Constitution are all farces. America in its inception was and continues to be genocidal. These purported and seemingly natural contradictions are not only unnatural, but they are purposeful and rigorously designed. And the foundational white supremacy of America is explicitly designed to perpetuate the unequal distribution of wealth.



*"Brother Jalil not only enlightened us with the historical context on the root of settler colonialism, but he inspired us with a vision and hope for a brighter future. As a survivor of 49 years of immoral imprisonment, brother Jalil epitomizes resilience and stands as an example to us all of our duty to work collectively and consistently to counteract the damage caused by conquest and to liberate all people from these systems of oppression."*

—Nada Noor, Palestinian Youth Movement

Jalil and his life partner, Valerie Haynes (member of the North East Political Prisoner Coalition and the International Campaign to Free Kamau Sadiki), spoke strongly about freeing US political prisoners. Jalil asserted that political prisoners are the best of us because they gave so much to and for the struggle and took a strong stand at moments in which many others wouldn't.

Jalil reminded us not to forget how traumatized the majority of the Black/African population is and how "state-sanctioned terror with impunity" can demoralize one's spirit. Yet while his body was imprisoned for almost 50 years, they never took his mind, and his organizing never ceased. Although the terrain changed, his mind was always outside with his people.

Jalil also highlighted his recent visit to Greece where he spoke on his life's work and stressed to those comrades that the world won't be free until the Black working class living in the imperial core is free. He pointed out that empires collapse internally. White supremacy is a pathological disorder/mental illness, and the struggle for white folk is to end white supremacy and discover their own humanity.

Finally, Jalil placed a heavy emphasis on understanding that our struggle is not a sprint, but a marathon, and how important it is to get organized.

Everyone who gathered at Alkebu-Lan Village expressed solidarity with Gaza and with the Palestinian struggle. Detroit Jericho organizer Sarah Torres shared a song for Palestine.

(Continued on page 15)

## ***Palestine Genocide Watch:***

# **South Africa and the ICJ/World Court: Some Legal and Action Points**

by **Huwaida Arraf**

[On January 11 and 12, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held initial hearings in the case being brought by South Africa against Israel for genocide in Gaza. The Peoples' Senate Newsletter urges organizations to sign on to the support statement at: [tinyurl.com/org-sign-on](https://tinyurl.com/org-sign-on)]

1. These hearings are for preliminary protective measures only; they will not decide whether Israel is committing genocide. However, an order for protective measures will constitute a finding from the court that Israel is plausibly in violation of the Genocide Convention and protective measures are necessary to prevent further harm/prevent genocide.

2. The case is incredibly strong, and it is very likely that the court will order protective measures. A decision is expected before the end of January.

3. An order of the International Court of Justice is binding and there is no appeal.

4. However, Israel is so accustomed to operating with impunity, it may very well refuse to abide by any order of the court, just like it has refused to abide by numerous UN Security Council resolutions, which are also binding.

5. The ICJ has no enforcement powers. If Israel refuses to comply, South Africa can go to the UN Security Council for a resolution ordering Israel to comply and instituting enforcement measures.

6. The US, of course, would be expected to scuttle any attempt at such a resolution and/or veto it.

7. If the UNSC doesn't act, the General Assembly can circumvent the UNSC and pass a resolution by a two-thirds majority. HOWEVER, for any such resolution to be effective, IT MUST include an agreement on enforcement measures. In other words, the

UNGA can agree to institute sanctions against Israel and/or take other actions, such as suspending Israel's membership in the UN, to compel Israel to comply.

8. Global civil society can help by continuing to mobilize to pressure our countries to support South Africa.



People gather outside The Hague to support South Africa's charges of genocide, January 11, 2024.

9. We can also put pressure on our countries to take their own measures against Israel if it refuses to comply. Words are not enough. Palestine needs action. UN resolutions without enforcement measures are useless.

10. Israel has brutalized Palestinians for over 75 years with total impunity. This is the first real chance to start to put an end to this impunity.

11. Palestinians are eternally grateful to South Africa and to everyone who has been mobilizing. Please keep on. ■





## Khalida Jarrar Arrested in Ramallah

This article reproduced from [tinyurl.com/KhalidaJ](https://tinyurl.com/KhalidaJ)

Jarrar is one of more than 4,800 detainees, both male and female, who have been arrested since October 7. They are enduring extremely difficult conditions, where within less than a month, six prisoners have been killed due to the tragic circumstances and repeated suppression inside the occupation's prisons.

The systematic and widespread targeting and pursuit by the occupation authorities against Jarrar and other human rights activists and former prisoners, depriving them of their basic rights, constitutes a crime against humanity as it amounts to persecution against a group for political reasons. ■

**News Flash:** On January 12, an Israeli court sentenced Jarrar to six months "administrative detention."

Ramallah—Addameer: The occupation forces arrested the human rights activist and former member of the legislative council Khalida Jarrar from her home in the city of Ramallah on Tuesday, December 26, after raiding and searching it. Jarrar is a former prisoner and a human rights activist who works as a researcher at the Muwatin Institute at Birzeit University. She has been arrested several times and was released from her last detention in September 2021, after spending two years in occupation prisons.

The arrest of Jarrar coincides with the comprehensive aggression by the occupation against Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem since October 7.

It is worth noting that the occupation authorities arrested Jarrar a few days after she published a research paper titled "Violations against Female and Male Prisoners during the Genocidal War on Gaza," in which she detailed the violations and crimes that the occupation began committing against prisoners inside occupation prisons since October 7 amid the widespread campaign of arrests carried out by the occupation authorities against Palestinians.

The arrest of Jarrar is part of the occupation's policy aimed at pursuing and punishing former prisoners and human rights activists to prevent them from monitoring and documenting the occupation's crimes and to hinder exposing these crimes at all levels. Until now, Jarrar has not been presented for a detention extension session. She is one of dozens of female prisoners who have been arrested recently and are facing the harshest detention conditions in many years.

### Israeli Draft Resisters

*[This is an excerpt. Complete article at: [tinyurl.com/no-to-military](https://tinyurl.com/no-to-military)]*

On Tuesday, Dec. 26, 18-year-old Tal Mitnick from Tel Aviv became the first Israeli to refuse mandatory military service since Israel launched its assault on the besieged Gaza Strip more than 80 days ago. Mitnick was summoned to Tel Hashomer recruitment center, where he declared himself to be a conscientious objector, and was sentenced to 30 days in military prison.

Mitnick is one of 230 Israeli high schoolers who signed an open letter in early September, prior to the war, announcing their intention to refuse their draft orders as part of a mobilization against efforts by Israel's far-right government to restrict the judiciary's power. Connecting the judicial coup to Israel's long-standing military rule over Palestinians, the high schoolers—who organized under the banner of "Youth Against Dictatorship"—declared that they would not join the army "until democracy is secured for all who live within the jurisdiction of the Israeli government." ■

# Labor Network for Ceasefire More Than One Million Strong

by Kathleen Chandler

December 14 saw an action outside the Capitol Building in Washington, DC, highlighting Unions for a Ceasefire Now. The demonstration involved many unions, including those that were part of the National Labor Network for a Ceasefire, involving more than one million workers. The Network includes auto and postal workers, health care workers, teachers, painters, city and state workers, service workers, steelworkers, and many more.

At the demonstration speakers demanded an immediate ceasefire, an end to US aid to Israel, and to “immediately restore the basic

rights of Palestinians who have been deprived of food, water, fuel, and life-saving medical aid so that the real work of justice for Palestinians can begin.” As the United Auto Workers (UAW) put it in a resolution: “as a labor movement, it’s up to us to stand up and fight for the best of what humanity is and can be.”

At a similar rally December 1 in front of the White House, the UAW announced its support for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.



UAW's Shawn Fain speaks at the Unions for a Ceasefire Now press conference outside the US Capitol, December 14, 2023. (Photo: Dawn Le)

With about 400,000 active members and more than 580,000 retired members, they are the largest US union to date to do so. UAW members joined those from unions across the country who stood with a broad-based group of hunger strikers demonstrating for Palestine. At the press conference, speaker after speaker denounced President Joe Biden for funding the Israeli bombardment and siege of Gaza. Participants included

*(Continued on page 15)*

## More US Cities Call for Ceasefire in Gaza

In addition to contention in Congress, Biden's unconditional support for Israel—even now as the genocide and war crimes increase—has more US cities passing resolutions demanding a ceasefire and an end to the siege of Gaza. Among the larger cities to pass resolutions are Akron, Ohio; Atlanta, Georgia; Detroit, Michigan; Oakland and Richmond, California; Providence, Rhode Island; Seattle, Washington; and Wilmington, Delaware.

The passing of the resolutions always includes broad mobilization of the public to speak, often for hours, at the city council meetings demanding support for Palestine. The public outrage is such that most resolutions are also demanding more humanitarian aid for Gaza, including fuel, food, and medical supplies.

The resolutions of some, such as from Richmond, and Ypsilanti, Michigan, also call for ending US aid to Israel, with people denouncing the



People pack Oakland City Council meeting and get resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza passed.

fact that the many bombers, tons of bombs, tanks, firepower of all kinds and more, continue to be supplied by the US. Various organizations are mobilizing to get more resolutions passed and encouraging cities to take further actions, like boycotts and divestment. ■



**Congress Gets it Wrong—Again****Anti-Zionism Is Not  
Anti-Semitism**

by Steve Bloom

On December 5, 2023, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution declaring that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. There were only 14 courageous votes against, with 92 voting “present.” The 314 “yes” votes might as well have passed a resolution declaring that the sky is green.

This false accusation against the anti-Zionist movement has been raised repeatedly since the 1950s, as a way to shield the Israeli state from criticism for its racist and genocidal policies against Palestinians.

Zionism is a particular ideology of Jewish nationalism. It declares that the solution to the historical oppression of Jews worldwide is the establishment and maintenance of an explicitly Jewish state. Zionism has never been the ideology of all Jews. Today there is a large and growing number of Jews who actively reject the Zionist project, many of whom have participated in the protests against the current Israeli genocide in Gaza. Anti-Zionist organizations like “Jewish Voice for Peace” and “Not in Our Name” have been involved in the anti-Zionist struggle for many years.

Zionism was founded in 1896 by Theodor Herzl, an Austro-Hungarian Jew. From then until World War II, Zionism was a small minority tendency within the Jewish diaspora. The Nazi genocide generated a significant shift in Jewish (and global) opinion, leading to the founding of Israel in 1947. We should note that this shift in opinion

received a significant boost from the racist immigration policies that barred most Holocaust survivors from emigrating to the USA—their preferred form of “self-determination” after the war—giving them no other option except to settle in Palestine.

The core Zionist philosophy is summed up in the racist concept of “a land without people for a people without land.” This denial that there were already people living in Palestine reflects the same settler-colonial mentality that allowed those of European descent to consider North America theirs for the taking starting in the 16th century, exterminating Indigenous populations in the process. It is not an accident that the Zionist state of Israel pursues a similar policy of extermination against the Palestinian people.

This issue takes on a heightened importance today because there is a new and dangerous rise in genuine anti-Semitism around the world. Ironically, this rise in anti-Semitism is actually fueled in part by the actions of the Israeli state in Gaza. Isn't it obvious that if Israel undertakes a genocidal project and claims to be acting in the name of “all Jews,” some ignorant people are likely to blame all Jews for the genocide? Of course this is not the only cause of the present anti-Semitic surge, which began years ago. Another cause is the increased popularity of right-wing ideology and racist conspiracy theories—like the idea that there is an international cabal of Jews and people of color which is attempting to “replace” the white population of the USA.

Whatever its source, anti-Semitism, like racism of all kinds, is destructive to the goal of building a world without genocide. We must stand against both Zionism and anti-Semitism as we pursue the struggle for global justice and human liberation. ■

**Alex Saab Is Free**

In our September 2023 issue, we reported on a conference in Venezuela to free Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab. We are happy to inform our readers that on December 20, the international campaign demanding his release from custody by the USA was successful. For more information:

[tinyurl.com/Alex-Saab](https://tinyurl.com/Alex-Saab). ■



Alex Saab



## Martin Luther King, Jr., Day—2024

It was 1966 when Dr. King first openly voiced his opposition to the Vietnam War, accusing the United States of violating the 1954 Geneva Accords, which recognize all nations as having a right to self-determination. In 1967, Dr. King then delivered his famous Riverside Church sermon condemning the Vietnam War and connecting the US aggression and massive expenditures on the war to poverty, inequality, and injustice toward Black people, the poor, and the Vietnamese peasants. Dr. King's prophetic sermon still reverberates today. The insights he offered remain relevant to the thousands who marched in Washington on Saturday, January 13, in protest of the US-backed Israeli genocide against Palestine. Thousands more participated again in gatherings, programs, rallies, and marches on King Day, Monday, January 15, 2024.



*Ralph Poynter was a longtime fighter for community control of education, political prisoners, Black rights, and human rights. His powerful voice for social justice was heard right to the end, as a radio host. We at Peoples' Senate offer our condolences and will carry on the work as Ralph demanded. He passed away on Christmas Day, 2023. Click on this link to read the beautiful obituary for Ralph and to leave a message or a memory on his tribute wall:*

[frankbellsh.com/obituary/Ralph-K-Poynter](http://frankbellsh.com/obituary/Ralph-K-Poynter)

*This poem was read at Ralph's memorial meeting in Brooklyn, NY, on January 7.*

### Poem by Julia Wright (untitled):

brother comrade Ralph  
you chose Christmas day  
to leave us

unobtrusively  
with your inimitable smile  
and always with a purpose  
you rose from your sickbed  
and joined  
our most recent ancestors—your  
comrades,  
Ruchell Magee  
and Ed Poindexter

the three of you,  
beyond white supremacist  
hubris,  
heads held proud,  
our ancestral Kings  
bearing the magnificent gifts  
of Unity  
Solidarity  
and Revolutionary Love  
have arrived  
in war-scarred Bethlehem  
the sacred site  
Israeli barbarism has now  
turned into  
a ghost town

but spirits  
come home to roost

little does the IDF know  
and the racist checkpoint soldiers  
cannot see you  
so  
the three of you  
bearing your perennial offerings  
are on your way  
to Gaza  
to preside  
over the rescue  
of thousands of Palestinian  
babies  
to break  
the ancient cycle  
of a genocide  
you were opposing  
from within  
the belly of the beast -  
and know so well

like your gifts,  
the legacy of your  
freedom fighter wisdom  
is infinite  
and we  
who are blessed  
to behold  
the three of you  
know you are everywhere  
and  
each dawn  
walking at our side



# Peoples' Senate Northeast Sponsors Series of Events



New York City "Welcome Home" event and film screening.

The Northeast Peoples' Senate project sponsored or co-sponsored three events in November and December. One was a two-day event that brought students and a former political prisoner together to discuss rights of prisoners and support students can give, at the State University of New York, New Paltz, November 10-11.

The second was participation in an annual holiday card-writing party for political prisoners on December 10, held at the Woodbine

community center in Queens, NY.

A film screening of the latest production by About the People, titled "Who Is Mumia Abu-Jamal?" took place on December 16 at the Maysles Cinema in Harlem, combined with a "welcome home" party for those recently released from prison. Highlights of the event included a live discussion by phone with Mumia, and the joy in bringing together and hearing from political prisoners who have been released. Funds were also

raised to support prisoners and their families. The militant spirit, exchange of experience, and discussion on building the Peoples' Senate inspired all. See photos from all three events above and below.

If you live in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania and you would like to get involved in the work of the Northeast Peoples' Senate, send an email to:

[PSNortheast@proton.me](mailto:PSNortheast@proton.me). ■



Resistance in Brooklyn holiday card-writing party for political prisoners.



Political prisoner event, New Paltz, NY.

## Joining the Peoples' Senate

Joining the Peoples' Senate is a formal, but easy process. You do not give up your autonomy or your organizing strategies. Please visit [spiritofmandela.org/peoples-senate-join](http://spiritofmandela.org/peoples-senate-join). There you can fill in the "Interest Form" so we know who you are. Then click the box that says "Peoples' Senate Membership Agreement" (PSMA), which you can also fill in and sign at the bottom.

Those who sign the PSMA "agree to work with other member organizations and individuals in upholding the Vision & Mission Statement of the Peoples' Senate." Each signer "also agrees with and supports the political position and outcome of the 2021 International Tribunal, which found the US guilty of five counts of genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples."

The Peoples' Senate is a multiracial, intergenerational coalition that welcomes all individuals and organizations prepared to join the work and our efforts to bring forward the voice and leadership of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples.

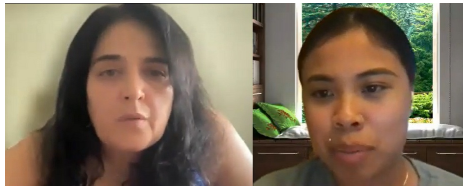
## National Lawyers Guild Discusses Spirit of Mandela 2021 Tribunal and Peoples' Senate

by Sophia Williams

On September 8, 2023, former Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army political prisoners Jihad Abdulmumit and Jalil Muntaqim shared their thoughts about the need for a Peoples' Senate with members of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) in a Zoom meeting moderated by Suzanne Adely, President of NLG, and Joelle Santiago, NLG Executive Director. Both guests elaborated the purpose, function, and expectations of the Peoples' Senate along with its connection to the October 2021 International Tribunal that found the USA guilty of five counts of genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples. (See box on page 2.)



Jihad Abdulmumit and  
Jalil Muntaqim.



Suzanne Adely and  
Joelle Santiago.

The speakers noted that this tribunal was developed in continuity with the charges of genocide that were brought in 1951 by

W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and William Patterson in a petition to the United Nations.

In their presentations, Muntaqim and Abdulmumit stressed the need for a unified peoples movement to push forward a long-lasting alternative, a society that truly embraces freedom.

Their historical assessment—one which goes beyond merely noting the reality that there are political prisoners in the USA and attempts to understand why this is true—was echoed by Adely. Abdulmumit also stressed how important it is for people to feel as if they are personally involved in the

*(Continued on page 13)*

*(Sekou Odinga continued from page 3)*

which Sister dequi has long been a part of). Baba Sekou was a masterful interpreter of George Jackson's edict: "Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation." Sekou showed by example what those words should look like in a 21st century context. And he co-founded and led the Coordinating Committee of our Spirit of Mandela coalition, supporting the People's Senate project, as a freedom fighter, activist, and stalwart campaigner till the very end.

Oh, how will we go on without this giant's presence among us? We have agenda items still to discuss, meetings with Baba that are not yet finished, in-progress writings not yet completed, roads to travel, and victories to be won! Our hearts are shattered, and our minds can barely wrap around the idea that we must attend our next session, our next Zoom, our next meeting, without our beloved Sekou. But we take some comfort in the fact that these are our challenges and not his: that Baba Sekou is now

finding a much-deserved rest. Baba Sekou led the way and challenged us to do better till his very end. To be blessed with an extraordinarily rich life is all we can ask for, and it is now up to us to sanctify Baba Sekou's extraordinary legacy. His earthly journey is complete, and as we weep, so, too, do we celebrate the man we called friend, family member, comrade. *Innallahi wa Innallahi raji'un.* ■



Sekou with Jalil Muntaqim (left) and David Gilbert (right).  
Photos by Matt Meyer.



(NLG continued from page 12)  
creation of an alternative movement that addresses the needs of the masses of oppressed peoples.

With a focus on having the NLG and other legal collectives get behind the goals of the Peoples' Senate, the specific asks

were for the NLG to (a) join and support the Peoples' Senate project and (b) help publicize both the Peoples' Senate and the verdict of October 2021. The possibility of filing a petition in federal courts based on the legal finding that the US is guilty of

genocide was raised.

In the words of Jalil Muntaqim, "The world won't be free until Black people are free."

The entire Zoom session can be viewed on line:

[tinyurl.com/NLG-Jalil-Jihad](https://tinyurl.com/NLG-Jalil-Jihad). ■

## Teach-in Series on Palestine Hosted by Southwest Peoples' Senate Organizers

[Note: We are unable to report on this series of teach-ins in this issue, although two of them have already occurred. As we go to press video of the first is available and the second will be soon. Links to the videos and information about how to register for the third teach-in can be found at [tinyurl.com/Palestine-teach-ins](https://tinyurl.com/Palestine-teach-ins).]

The Texas People's Tribunal is hosting a three-part virtual teach-in about Palestine titled "If I Must Die, You Must Live: An International Teach-in on War, the Death Penalty, Political Imprisonment, and the Palestinian Genocide."

As abolitionists living in the death penalty capital of the world, the Texas Peoples' Tribunal unequivocally supports the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, self-defense, and life. We believe that it is imperative for people residing in the US republic to be in solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Cosponsoring organizations include the Spirit of Mandela Coalition, the Peoples' Senate, Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty, Activist News Network, National Jericho Movement, and the International Peace Research Association.

Our three-part initiative aims to (1) explain the history of Palestinian resistance to Israeli settler colonialism, and how it relates to the ongoing Palestinian genocide; (2) assess the parallels between Israel and the US's use of lethal violence against racialized peoples; and (3) illustrate the urgency of redefining and strengthening international solidarity.

- Teach-in 1: History & Context

Date: Thursday, Jan. 4

Time: 7pm CT/ 8pm ET

- Teach-in 2: Gaza & Genocidal Executions

Date: Thursday, Jan. 18

Time: 7pm CT/ 8pm ET

- Teach-in 3: Redefining Solidarity

Date: Thursday, Feb. 1

Time: 7pm CT/8pm ET

Presenters in the series include Huwaida Arraf, M. Muhannad Ayyash, Linda Quiquivix, Jihad Abdulmumit, Gerald Horne, Tania Siddiqi, Matt Meyer, and more. For additional information, please click on this link for the Texas Peoples' Tribunal: [tinyurl.com/Palestine-teach-ins](https://tinyurl.com/Palestine-teach-ins).

**Editorial:**

## **Election Season 2024—Time to Renew Our Struggles**

As the Presidential election season gets underway many state governments are attacking voting rights, reproductive freedoms, and even public education that does not promote a white-supremacist history of the USA. The Supreme Court has been discredited, with rulings against rights and widespread scandal. The Democratic Party—from President Biden on down—is presenting itself as a bulwark against this onslaught. But we remind our readers that the policy of genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples has been a bilateral one, pursued by politicians of both major parties not only here in the USA but on a global scale. There is a reason why the current president of the USA has earned the nickname “Genocide Joe” for his policies in relation to the genocide being waged by Israel against the population of Gaza.

At the same time we realize that many will see no alternative except to vote for the candidate they perceive as the “lesser evil” in 2024, as has been true in elections past. As a developing institution, the Peoples' Senate is working to unite those with a wide range of electoral strategies. Everyone is welcome, so long as we are all committed to the struggle against genocide. Our goal today is, simply, in that context, to remind our readers that something else is far more decisive than who gets elected to what political office: the level of consciousness and organization of independent mass struggles in defense of their rights waged by and for the oppressed themselves—including making demands on anyone and everyone who might be in power. In the face of government failure and genocide, the Peoples' Senate is working to develop an alternative that puts decision-making power in the hands of the people.

The last great wave of victories for the movements of the oppressed in the USA and worldwide came during the 1960s and early '70s. With great determination, significant victories were achieved

during this time. This period saw the rise of the anti-Vietnam War mobilizations; the Black Panthers, Black Liberation Army, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers; the American Indian Movement and Women of All Red Nations; the Chicano Moratorium and La Raza Unida Party among other manifestations of the Chicano movement in the Southwest; the Young Lords among Puerto Ricans in the USA and a growth of the independence movement in Puerto Rico. This organizing brought achievements in voting rights, an end to Jim Crow laws in the South, affirmative action, reproductive freedoms, and more.

Starting in the 1980s, as the rulers took the offensive and independent mobilizations receded, the rolling back of hard-won gains began. The general trend until more recently has been for struggles to be less intense and less independent, and for the attacks on rights to increase. It's not a coincidence. With each election cycle, both the Republicans and the Democrats move further to the right, which they can do freely when there is no real social movement challenging them after they succeed in winning public office. The broad movements that developed against the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the persistent struggles against racist police killings and inequality, the demands for justice and women's rights, and now the growing support of Palestine, are beginning to challenge those in power in essential ways.

The Peoples' Senate salutes these efforts and is focused on helping to develop, promote, and unite the struggles of and by Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples, along with others. We work to bring forward their leadership as vital to strengthening the organized resistance of all. However you plan to vote in 2024, we hope that you will join us in remaining focused on this, too, as an essential area of work and our primary point of agreement as supporters of a Peoples' Senate. ■

*(Detroit, continued from page 5)*

A video of the meeting is available at: [tinyurl.com/video-detroit](https://tinyurl.com/video-detroit).

The event was organized by Detroit Jericho, Malcom X Grassroots Movement-Detroit, Spirit of Mandela Coalition, and our gracious host, Alkebulan Village. Other groups represented in attendance included the Palestinian Youth Movement-Detroit Chapter, The James and Grace Lee Boggs Center, Moratorium NOW! Coalition, The Center for Pan-African Studies, Start:Empowerment, Michigan General Defense Committee, Freedom/Freedom Community, Militant Media Midwest, Detroiters Working



for Environmental Justice, Community Healing Network, Party for Socialism and Liberation, and Nsoromma Unschool. ■

“The November 2nd gathering left an indelible mark on our collective consciousness and in our hearts. Feelings of hope and anticipation were palpable in Alkebu-Lan Village, with our time together filled with moments of inspiration and enthusiastic commitment to the journey ahead. Baba Jalil humbly shared incomparable wisdom and rich histories that reignited our thirst for a liberated world and the limitless possibilities that exist when we embark on the journey to achieving it. Community conversation ranged from thought-provoking discussions on the state of organizing to practical tips that could immediately apply in our current and future organizing lives. We were further propelled into a deep sense of purpose and duty, looking forward to what our collective power can and will achieve.”

—Camille Jackson, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and Detroit Jericho

*(Labor, continued from page 8)*

Palestinian and Jewish organizations, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, and anti-war and rights activists.

The UAW resolution calls for "building a global community of solidarity." UAW officials declared unequivocally, "We opposed fascism in World War II, we opposed the Vietnam War, we opposed apartheid South Africa, and we mobilized union resources in that fight." Given that Biden joined the UAW picket lines to still be seen as a "union man," the resolution by the UAW directly demanding he push for a ceasefire has significance. Far from being known as a "union man," Biden is

now aptly called "Genocide Joe."

A call initiated by United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), UAW and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) has garnered support from more than 4,150 union locals and others. Reflecting the internationalist spirit evident in the many actions where workers are mobilizing, it says, "We express our solidarity with all workers and our common desire for peace in Palestine and Israel."

The UE's policy resolution "demands the US government end all military aid to Israel" and supports "a peace agreement on the basis of equality, democracy, and human rights for the

Palestinian and Israeli people, including Palestinian self-determination and the right of return for refugees."

In the past, workers and their unions have taken stands to refuse to load war material, for instance bound for Iraq, and to refuse to unload goods such as from South Africa. The demand is to take similar actions now. ■



Many unions, including the UAW and UE, gathered outside the Capitol to demand a ceasefire now. (credit: UE Local 190)



## **Calendar of Events:**

- January 9—Political prisoner birthday: Abdul Aziz [vi3.org](http://vi3.org)
- January 15—Political prisoner birthday: Joseph Bowen [tinyurl.com/Joe-joe-bowen](http://tinyurl.com/Joe-joe-bowen)
- January 18, 7pm CT/ 8pm ET—Peoples' Senate Southwest teach-in on Gaza, part 2. (See box on page 14)
- February 1, 7pm CT/ 8pm ET—Peoples' Senate Southwest teach-in on Gaza, part 3. (See box on page 14)
- February 4, and the first Sunday of every month, 1 pm—Northeast Region Peoples' Senate monthly general meeting (in person and Zoom). For more information, send an email to [PSNortheast@proton.me](mailto:PSNortheast@proton.me).
- February 4—Political prisoner birthday: Veronza Bowers [veronza.org](http://veronza.org)
- February 8—Women United Against Genocide open webinar: “South Africa, Palestine, Settler Colonialism, and National Liberation in the 21st Century,” 8 pm ET. For information send an email to: [info@womenunitedagainstgenocide.org](mailto:info@womenunitedagainstgenocide.org).
- February 19—Political prisoner birthday: Freddie Hilton (Kamau Sadiki) [linktr.ee/freekamausadiki](http://linktr.ee/freekamausadiki)
- February 20—Political prisoner birthday: Abdullah Malike Ka'bah (aka Jeff Fort) [tinyurl.com/newafrikan77](http://tinyurl.com/newafrikan77)
- February 26—Political prisoner birthday: Byron-Shane Chubbuck (Oso Blanco) [freeosoblanco.org](http://freeosoblanco.org)
- March 8—Women United Against Genocide: International Working Women’s Day Annual Webinar, 8pm ET. For information send an email to: [info@womenunitedagainstgenocide.org](mailto:info@womenunitedagainstgenocide.org).

The **Spirit of Mandela** website maintains a broad movement calendar in News/Events at [spiritofmandela.org](http://spiritofmandela.org) If you would like to submit an event for this calendar, please do so by filling in the form at: [tinyurl.com/SoM-calendar](http://tinyurl.com/SoM-calendar)

## **Links and Resources:**

Spirit of Mandela webpage: [spiritofmandela.org](http://spiritofmandela.org)

Peoples' Senate webpage: [spiritofmandela.org/peoples-senate](http://spiritofmandela.org/peoples-senate)

October 2021 International Tribunal verdict and information: [tribunal2021.com](http://tribunal2021.com)

Peoples' Senate Webinar video (February 18, 2023): [youtu.be/c0bXzBFbYIg](https://youtu.be/c0bXzBFbYIg)