

In the Spirit of Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells, the National Conference of Black Lawyers Calls on the United States, the State and Federal governments, to Release All Political Prisoners

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Hugo Pinell (Dahariki), born **March 10, 1945** was incarcerated in 1964, when he was 19 years old. In the 1960s and 1970 he joined with Black Panther George Jackson to bring attention to the oppressive prison conditions, including racial violence. **Dahariki** has been subjected to the well known inhumane conditions of California prisons, including spending more than 34 years in solitary confinement, despite remaining infraction-free for more than 24 years. He has been denied parole nine times. In the most recent Parole Board appearance his parole was denied for the vague reason that he evidenced “insufficient rehabilitation”, despite being infraction-free for almost a quarter century. As a result of these parole board denial and the Board’s non-informative reasons for denial, he has no reasonable expectation of being released from prison.

Harriet Tubman, born **March**, 1821. Harriet Tubman was known as the “Conductor” of the Underground Railroad. She freed herself from enslavement in Maryland; yet, she risked life and limb returning on numerous occasions and leading as many as 300 enslaved Africans to freedom. Ms. Tubman also served as a spy for the Union Army, contributing significantly to the defeat of the Confederate Army. After the Civil War, Ms. Tubman settled in upper state New York. She continued her activism by joining the movement for women’s right. She also opened a home for the aged and infirm, where she lived in her later years.

Ida B. Wells died **March 25, 1931** at the age of 69. She is best known for her dogged fight to end the lynching of black people throughout the South. As a teacher and journalist, she used her skills writing and distributing numerous pieces about the pervasive lynching. She travelled throughout the United States and abroad to raise awareness of this violation of human rights. Part of her work included a campaign lobbying the United States Congress to pass anti-lynching legislation. The United States Senate turned its back on this crime against humanity. In 2005, the United States Senate apologized for its failure, on numerous occasions, to pass this legislation. Yet, Ms. Ida B. Wells and those black people who lost their lives to lynching, their families and those who lived in fear of lynching deserve more than an apology.

The courage, tenacity, commitment to justice and compassion of Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells inspire and motivate NCBL’s work and undergird our efforts to end the “legal lynching” of political prisoners through interminable incarceration for political reasons. It is in this spirit that we call for the release of Hugo Pinell and all US political prisoners.