

June 17, 2020

The Honorable Governor Phil Murphy
The State House
225 State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Re: Commutation of sentence - Sundiata Acoli (fka Clark Squire) Reg. #39794-066

Dear Governor Murphy,

We, the undersigned clergy of New Jersey write to express our collective support for the immediate release of Sundiata Acoli from prison. We strongly urge you to use your executive authority to do so. As faith leaders, we believe in redemption and salvation - tenets that could not be more appropriately understood than in the case of this 83 year old man in failing health who has been incarcerated for the past 47 years. Mr. Acoli is incarcerated from conviction of charges in the state of New Jersey and is currently serving his sentence in a federal prison in Cumberland, MD.

We understand and appreciate the seriousness of the crimes for which he was convicted. Our request is in no way meant to denigrate the victims' families or ignore the loss of life. However, it is our belief that Mr. Acoli has been more than adequately punished for those acts. The continued incarceration of this senior citizen serves no useful purpose as Mr. Acoli represents absolutely no threat to public safety. For more than 25 years he has had a completely infraction free record in prison. This exemplary accomplishment coupled with his age and the over 100 programs, classes and certificates he has been awarded all provide ample reason for you to feel confident that releasing him is the right and humane thing to do.

Prior to his incarceration, Mr. Acoli had a bright career as a computer programmer; a position that very few if any African American men held in the early 1970's. Throughout his 47 years in prison he has maintained a close and nurturing relationship with his daughters who anxiously await his release so that they can provide for and take care of him in his final years of life. For more than 40 years, Mr. Acoli was imprisoned in federal facilities hundreds of miles away from his family. The distance has made it very difficult for his only sister and ailing mother to visit before she passed away.

Mr. Acoli's health complications are of enormous and urgent concern to us. As the nation navigated the ravages of the COVID19 pandemic, Mr. Acoli had to be rushed to a

hospital in Maryland when he fell ill from the COVID19 virus. For several days he was maintained on oxygen. Thankfully he survived, but lost 30 pounds while hospitalized (a very serious health challenge for a slightly built man). Recently, he was bedridden for a week due to intestinal complications. In recent years, prison staff, family and legal advocates have observed his advancing dementia. For all of the reasons stated above, we unconditionally call upon you to release Mr. Acoli from prison immediately. When he is released, we pledge to stand with you and champion your just and humane decision in the midst of this crisis situation. Thank you,

Rev. Lukata Mjumbe
Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church
Princeton, NJ

Rev. Charles Boyer
Bethel AME
Woodbury, NJ

Rev. Dave Davis
Nassau Presbyterian Church
Princeton, NJ

Rev. Toby Sanders
Beloved Community
Trenton, NJ

Rev. Dr. Carol Lynn Patterson
Setting the Captive Free Ministries
East Brunswick, NJ

Rev. Timothy Levi Adkins-Jones
Bethany Baptist Church
Newark, NJ

Rev. Sharyl Dixon
Kingston Presbyterian Church
Kingston, NJ

Rev. Maureen Gerald
Shiloh Baptist Church
Trenton, NJ

Rev. Carla Jones Brown
(Cherry Hill, NJ)
Arch Street Presbyterian Church
Philadelphia, PA

Rev. Marcus C. Lambright
First Presbyterian Church of Trenton
Trenton, NJ

Rev. Molly Dykstra
First Presbyterian Church of Trenton
Trenton, NJ

Rev. Saafir Jenkins
Ruach Outreach Ministries
Newark, NJ

Rabbi Ira Dounn
Highland Park, NJ

Rev. Alexis Fuller-Wright
Christ Congregation
Princeton, NJ

Rev. Nicholas A. Johnson
Raritan Valley Baptist Church
Edison, NJ

Rev. Carmine A. Pernini
Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council
Rahway, NJ

Rev. Jan Willem Vanderwerff
Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church
Plainsboro, NJ

Rev. Fred Sullivan
Bethlehem Baptist Church
Newark, NJ

Rev. Anita Wright
Trinity United Presbyterian Church
Montclair, NJ

Dean Rene John
Trinity Cathedral Presbyterian Church
Trenton, NJ

Rev. Simone Oliver
ReVision Ministries
Lawrenceville, NJ

Rev. J. Amos Caley
Reformed Church of Highland Park
Highland Park, NJ

Rev. Susan MacDonnell
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton
Princeton, NJ

Rev. Bob Gregson
Unitarian Universalist Faith in Action
Summit, NJ

Rev. David Ruisard
Rockaway Reformed Church
Whitehouse Station, NJ

Rev. Crystal White
Fairlawn, NJ

Rev. Karen Hernandez-Granzen
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Trenton, NJ

Rev. Scott Sammler-Michael
Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Montclair, NJ

Rev. Leslie Houseworth-Fields
The Mark
Montclair, NJ

Reverend Dr. Jeffrey Vamos
The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville
Lawrenceville, NJ

Rev. Eric Kussman
Saint Bartholomew Lutheran Church
Trenton, NJ

Rev. Ryan Irmer
Slackwood Presbyterian Church
Slackwood, NJ

Rev. Michael Granzen
Second Presbyterian Church
Elizabeth, NJ

Imam Sohaib Sultan
Princeton, NJ

Rev. James Klots
Slackwood Presbyterian Church
Slackwood, NJ

Rev. Rory Chambers
Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church
Plainsboro, NJ

Rev. Dr. Mark Taylor
Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, NJ

Canon Brian Jemmott
Diocesan Office, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
Trenton, NJ

Father Andy Moore
Saint Elizabeth Episcopal Church
Elizabeth, NJ

Pastor Gregory Smith
Saint Paul United Methodist Church
Willingboro, NJ

Min. Nicholas Young
Child Welfare & Well-Being Research Unit
New Brunswick, NJ

Elder Lisa Austin Granville
Full Gospel Pentecostal Church Independent Church
Trenton, NJ

Min. Patricia A. Hall
ANEW Way Ministries
Trenton, NJ