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June 16, 2020

The Honorable Governor Phil Murphy  
The State House  
125 W. State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Re: Commutation of sentence - Sundiata Acoli (aka Clark Squire)

Dear Governor Murphy,

We, the People's Organization for Progress, write to express our unconditional support for the immediate release of Sundiata Acoli from prison, and we strongly urge you to use your executive authority to do so. Mr. Acoli is an 83 year-old elder who is in failing health, and who has been incarcerated for the past 47 years. For 27 years he has had a completely discipline free record in prison. This amazing accomplishment along with his age and the over 100 programs, classes and certificates he has achieved all provide ample evidence for you to feel confident that releasing him is the right thing to do, and that it would not create any threat to public safety.

The COVID19 pandemic has served to exacerbate Mr. Acoli's already compromised health. Several weeks ago he was hospitalized due to having contracted the COVID19 virus. While we are extremely grateful that he was able to survive, we remain concerned for his health because he never fully recovered. Added to his health issues is the fact that he is suffering from advancing dementia. In addition, we know that close confinement in prisons has proven to be catastrophic for some, and endangered the lives of others given the Covid 19 pandemic in such close quarters.

We fully understand the seriousness of the crimes for which he was convicted. However, it is our belief that Mr. Acoli has been more than fully punished for his crimes and his continued incarceration costs the taxpayers of New Jersey and serves no useful purpose.

Despite being held in prisons thousands of miles away from his family, Mr. Acoli and his daughters were able to develop a close and unbreakable bond. Thankfully, his daughter Sunni, will be able to provide an economically and socially stable environment to care for her father.

Commuting Mr. Acoli's sentence and releasing him from prison is a dignified, just, and compassionate action in this situation Governor Murphy, and we ask that you use your power to send him home to his family.

We thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lawrence Hamm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lawrence Hamm

Chairman

People's Organization for Progress