

Indigenous activist and political prisoner Leonard Peltier granted clemency by outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden



Washington, January 20 (RHC)-- In one of his last official acts before leaving the White House, President Joe Biden released Leonard Peltier from prison. The action is an extraordinary move that ends a decades-long push by Indigenous activists, international religious leaders, human rights organizations and Hollywood insiders who argued that the 80-year-old Native American activist was wrongly convicted.

The commutation was widely opposed by law enforcement who insisted that Peltier's actions were cold-blooded, and he should remain imprisoned for the rest of his life for murdering FBI agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams in 1975. The agents' deaths came at a time when tensions were high over a nationwide struggle between the U.S. government and activists for Native American civil and treaty rights.

“Tribal Nations, Nobel Peace laureates, former law enforcement officials (including the former U.S. Attorney whose office oversaw Mr. Peltier’s prosecution and appeal), dozens of lawmakers, and human rights organizations strongly support granting Mr. Peltier clemency, citing his advanced age, illnesses, his close ties to and leadership in the Native American community, and the substantial length of time he has already spent in prison,” said Biden in a statement today.

Nick Tilsen, the executive director of NDN Collective, an Indigenous led non-profit, says Peltier’s release is a historic moment that comes after many years of organizing and lobbying across the globe.

“Leonard Peltier now gets to go home. Every Indian person ever, ever wanted to do, was go home and back to their people. And now he’s going to have an opportunity to do that,” Tilsen said.

“To say this is overdue is an understatement, and the massive effort to push for Leonard’s freedom by so many is unparalleled,” said Robert Gifford, a criminal defense attorney who has worked to secure Peltier’s clemency for more than four years.

Biden’s action isn’t a pardon that forgives Peltier’s offense, but rather a commutation – which lessens his sentence and effectively frees him from prison. Peltier suffers from complications related to diabetes, kidney disease and near blindness, and his attorneys argued that he would not survive much longer in prison.

Peltier has been held in Florida at Coleman 1, a federal detention center in Sumter County.

Peltier’s latest bid for parole was denied last July. He wasn’t eligible for another hearing until June 2026.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/374539-indigenous-activist-and-political-prisoner-leonard-peltier-granted-clemency-by-outgoing-us-president-joe-biden>



Radio Habana Cuba