



National Religious Campaign Against Torture

www.nrcat.org
campaign@nrcat.org
202-547-1920

**Rev. Dr. Patricia Bates on behalf of:
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Tuesday, January 7, 2014
Albert Woodfox Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Hearing**

My name is Rev. Dr. Patricia Bates, and I am here today on behalf of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, a coalition of over 325 religious organizations who share a common commitment to end torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

I urge the state to withdraw its appeal against the February 2013 ruling that overturned Mr. Albert Woodfox's conviction for murder so that he can be freed. Justice must not be deferred nor delayed another hour. I call upon Attorney General Mr. James Caldwell, Governor Bobby Jindal, Secretary of the Department of Public Safety, Mr. James M. LeBlanc, and Ms. Jocelyn Samuels, Acting Assistant Attorney General, to see that Albert Woodfox is immediately removed from isolation and an end to his inhumane treatment in prison.

I am an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church, and it is my faith that compels me to be here today. There is no moral justification for holding one of God's children in solitary confinement for over forty-one years, a man, Mr. Albert Woodfox, whose conviction has been overturned for the third time. It is my Christian faith that reminds me that Jesus taught us that what we do to those in prison, we do to him. As a faith leader, I am here to share the religious community's strong support for the immediate release of Mr. Albert Woodfox, and to call for an end to the immorality and inhumanity of his confinement. The religious community cannot abide this grave injustice and we call for Mr. Woodfox's release without delay.

Last year, we witnessed the inhumane treatment of Mr. Herman Wallace, released just days before his passing after over forty-years in solitary confinement. The experience of Mr. Wallace, and Mr. King with whom I stand today, tells a devastating tale of the immorality and indignity of our justice system. Even as I speak, we remember that over 80,000 men, women and youth in U.S. prisons, jails and detention centers are subjected to solitary confinement on any given day, detained in a cell alone for 23 hours a day for months, years, decades. Such conditions have long been considered a form of torture. People of faith recognize that solitary confinement denies the essential God-given need for community and destroys not only the individuals subjected to such conditions but also our families, communities and the loved ones of those subjected to such inhumane treatment.

Let us not delay another day in doing what is right, moral and just: we call for the release of Mr. Albert Woodfox, and an end to his more than four decades in such cruel and inhumane conditions, today.