

**National Conference of Black Lawyers,
in the Spirit of Medgar Evers and Walter Rodney,
Continues to Call for Release of all Political Prisoners**

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Medgar Evers was born in Decatur, Mississippi. He was the State Field Secretary for the NAACP and was a primary organizer in Mississippi against the violations of human rights under “Jim Crow.” He was assassinated (shot in the back) in his driveway in Jackson, Mississippi on **June 12, 1963**, in an unsuccessful attempt to destroy the movement against Jim Crow in Mississippi. In 1964, White Citizens Council and Ku Klux Klan member, Byron De La Beckwith, was arrested and charged with Medgar Evers’s murder. The first two trials ended in “jury deadlock”. Undaunted, civil and human rights activists organized to pressure the state prosecutor to retry La Beckwith for this cowardly and heinous crime. He was finally convicted in 2004 for the murder.

Walter Rodney was born in Georgetown, Guyana. He was a noted historian and a fierce advocate for the working class. Rodney spoke eloquently about the people’s power to self emancipate. Dr. Rodney authored several outstanding works, including “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.” He was harassed and threatened until his assassination on June 13, 1980, by a bomb exploding in the middle of Georgetown, Guyana.

Sekou Odinga was born **June 17, 1944**, in Queens, New York. He joined the Black Panther Party in 1968 and established an international chapter of the Black Panther Party in Algeria. The Black Panther Party was infiltrated by the FBI’s Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO), therefore, when Odinga returned to the U.S. he left the Party and worked underground with the Black Liberation Army. In 1981, he was captured by FBI agents and New York City police and tortured. He was charged with, among other things, aiding in the liberation of Assata Shakur from a New Jersey Prison. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to 40 years on federal charges and two consecutive terms of 25 years on state charges. Currently incarcerated in New York State, Odinga has been subjected to various forms of physical abuse during his almost 30 years of incarceration.

Abdul Majid was born **June 25, 1949**, and like Odinga, is a native of Queens, New York. A target of the FBI’s COINTELPRO as a member of the Black Panther Party, Majid was arrested, charged and convicted of the murder of a New York City police officer and is incarcerated in New York. The prosecuting attorney, now a justice of the New York Supreme Court, purportedly systematically excluded blacks from the jury with the rationale that due to blacks’ religious beliefs they would not vote to convict Abdul Majid and codefendant, Basheer Hameed, who died in prison.

The treatment of Odinga and Majid violates international human rights laws among them, the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The NCBL calls for the end of these violations and for the release of all political prisoners.