

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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US authorities urged to improve prison conditions for Leonard Peltier

Amnesty International has written to Warden Bledsoe at the United States Penitentiary in Lewisburg to express concern at reports that Leonard Peltier has been placed in isolation as a disciplinary measure which could continue for six months.

According to reports, Peltier was moved at the end of June following two minor infractions, one of which included tampering with the wires to the lighting in his cell, which he vehemently denies. He is reportedly locked in his cell for most of the day.

Amnesty International is concerned that Peltier may have been unfairly punished for an offence he did not commit, and that confinement to a cell for a prolonged period with inadequate exercise and other deprivations could be detrimental to his health, particularly in view of the poor state of his physical health and existing medical conditions.

Amnesty International has urged Warden Bledsoe to review Peltier's confinement to isolation, and to ensure that he has an opportunity to fairly contest any charges against him. It has also urged him not to confine Peltier in conditions which may be detrimental to his health, and to give him access to appropriate medical treatment he may need.

In addition, Amnesty International has urged Warden Bledsoe to review conditions for all prisoners held in isolation following reports that they receive no alleviation from the heat and sleep on the floor at night in order to get some respite from the very high temperatures, which have reportedly recently reached 100 degrees fahrenheit in the locality.

Background Information

Leonard Peltier is a prominent member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), who was convicted of the murders of two Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents during a confrontation involving AIM members on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1975. Peltier, who has always denied shooting the agents, was sentenced to two sentences of life imprisonment in 1977. Amnesty International has ongoing concerns about the fairness of the process leading to his conviction.

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