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Attica is Now: Community Leaders Gather in NYC & Albany on 49th Anniversary of Attica Prison Massacre to Demand Justice for Incarcerated New Yorkers

The Group Called on Gov. Cuomo & State Lawmakers to Release People from Prison, End the Practice of Solitary Confinement, Among Other Changes

Zoom Recording [Here](#) (rally starts at 0:14.39)

Sunday, September 13, 2020 (New York)--Survivors of the Attica prison uprising, community leaders, and advocacy groups gathered in Albany outside the State Capitol and in downtown New York City on the 49th anniversary of the final day of the Attica prison uprising to call on Gov. Cuomo and state lawmakers to pass legislation to address the crisis of mass incarceration. The group specifically highlighted four bills currently pending in Albany, including: Elder Parole (S.2144), Fair and Timely Parole (S.497A), HALT Solitary Confinement Act (S.1623), and the Repeal Walking While Trans Ban (S.2253).

On September 13, 1971, New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered the national guard and New York State police to end the popular uprising of people incarcerated at Attica Correctional Facility in Batavia, New York by killing dozens and torturing hundreds more incarcerated people. Over the course of a four day period between September 9 and September 13, 1971, hundreds of men took over Attica prison to demand basic human rights in the criminal justice system, including parole reform and an end to solitary confinement. In response to the uprising, the state police and national guard executed nearly 40 incarcerated people, and tortured and beat hundreds of incarcerated men who remained at Attica after.

Today, there are more than double the number of incarcerated people in New York State prisons, serving unprecedentedly long prison sentences, and facing the same racism, brutality, slave labor conditions, and solitary confinement that people at Attica protested in 1971.

Speakers at the event said:

Akil Shakur, formerly incarcerated survivor of the Attica uprising, said, "I was shot four times at Attica. I stayed there from September 13 to January 3 when I was released on parole. It was a horrific scene, they used ammunition on us that had been banned in Vietnam at the time. They weren't even allowed to use that in war."

Tyronne Larkins, formerly incarcerated survivor of the Attica uprising, said, "I look up into the sky and see overcast. It was the same conditions on Sept. 13, 1971. But what I don't see today is helicopters over head or the ground bouncing up and down from bullets. I don't see people falling to the ground. I see people commemorating those who fought."

Emma Pierre, Community Leader with the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, whose husband is serving a life prison sentence, said, “From 1971 to 2020, it’s the same story over and over. The men in Attica came up with demands and Gov. Rockefeller never listened. And now with Governor Cuomo we’re still fighting for the same demands. I have not heard one word from Cuomo.”

Nawanna Tucker, Community Leader with the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, whose husband is serving a life prison sentence, said, “My loved one has been in prison for 32 years for a crime he didn’t commit. No one cares about our loved ones. The only thing Governor Cuomo said during this pandemic about incarcerated people is that they were making hand sanitizer that they themselves couldn’t even use.”

Victor Pate, Community Organizer with the #HALTsolitary Campaign, said, “Attica is today. Attica is yesterday. Attica will be tomorrow if we the people don’t come together and stop it.”

Other speakers included: **TS Candi** of the campaign to repeal “Walking While Trans,” **Ivelisse Gilestra** of the Justice for Women COVID-19 Task Force, **Pam Neely** of New Hour for Women and Children, **two young people** whose fathers are serving life sentences, **Peggy Herrera** of VOCAL-NY, **Darlene Taylor**, whose son Dante died by guard brutality in Wende Prison, and messages from [Monifa Bandele of the Movement for Black Lives](#) and Michael Deutsch of the People’s Law Office in Chicago, and **Jose Saldana** and **Mark Shervington** of RAPP.

At the same time, a RAPP rally was held in Albany, NY, in West Capitol Park (also on the zoom recording)

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