

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

October 13, 2020

Contact: Dave George, ddgeorge23@gmail.com, 631-885-3565

**Joint Statement in Response to the Prison Death of Salih Abdullah:
74 Year-Old Incarcerated New Yorker Who Needlessly Died at His 14th
Appearance in Front of the State Parole Board After 47 years in Prison**

(New York, NY) -- Today, the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign and Parole Preparation Project released the following statement in the wake of an [exclusive story](#) by the *Daily News* highlighting the tragic in-prison death of incarcerated New Yorker Salih Abdullah:

“We mourn the death of Salih Abdullah, who suffered a fatal stroke in the middle of his 14th appearance before the New York State Board of Parole at Wende Correctional Facility on September 16, 2020. His death is both devastating and infuriating. For too long, the Board has played politics with peoples’ lives and pandered to the undue influence of racist law enforcement interest groups over the parole release process. The police got exactly what they always advocate for in this case: a needless and violent death of a Black man behind prison walls.

Mr. Abdullah was a mentor, scholar, and leader in the Muslim community across the prison system. He posed no risk to public safety and should have been released decades ago after completing his 25-year minimum sentence imposed by a judge. His death is a reminder of the deadly and violent nature of Governor Cuomo’s prison system, and the power the Parole Board wields over the lives of thousands of New Yorkers. Unlike what many racist special interest groups want the public to believe, and despite some small advances, the Parole Board’s own data proves that they continue to deny release to the majority of incarcerated people they interview, disproportionately Black and Latinx people. Mr. Abdullah’s death reminds all New Yorkers of the urgency behind modernizing the parole process in New York to honor healing, forgiveness, and the right to be judged for who a person is today. We join his family, friends, and community in working to ensure that death by incarceration ends in New York State.

###