
U.S. lawmakers demand release of Leonard Peltier

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Democratic congressional representatives Deb Haaland of New Mexico and Raúl Grijalva of Arizona are urging the Trump administration to release Native American rights activist Leonard Peltier from federal prison and grant him clemency.

A political prisoner, Leonard Peltier is a former member of the American Indian Movement who was convicted of killing two FBI agents during a shootout on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 1975. He has long maintained his innocence.

Leonard Peltier suffers from heart problems and diabetes. His supporters point to a Federal Bureau of Prisons program allowing the early release of elderly prisoners and people with underlying health conditions during the pandemic.

So far, only 2,500 federal prisoners have been released to home confinement, even though COVID-19 has already caused the death of at least 340 people in jails and prisons around the United States.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump's disgraced former campaign chair Paul Manafort was released from prison Wednesday and will serve the remainder of his sentence under home confinement. Manafort's lawyers successfully argued his health and age made him especially vulnerable to contracting COVID-19 in prison.