

Remarks by Angela Davis, June 20 San Quentin Demonstration

I'm very happy to participate in this second automobile caravan protest, "No State Execution by COVID-19". I'd like to thank the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal for organizing this second protest, now, not only under conditions created by the pandemic, by the pandemic COVID-19, but also under conditions stemming from another related pandemic, the pandemic of racist state violence, as represented by the gruesome murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubery, Tony McDade, Rayshard Brooks, and others.

Kevin Cooper, who has spent 35 years on Death Row, and whose life we have been trying to save for many years, is now, as he has said, subject to another death penalty. We say: Free Kevin Cooper! Decarcerate San Quentin! Jails and prisons need to be depopulated! That is the only way to prevent the spread of the virus, but that is also the only way toward a more just future.

San Quentin represents not only some of the worst examples of racist repression, but also struggle, determination and the production of important knowledge that has helped us conceptualize possibilities of abolishing prisons and police. To our sisters and brothers behind bars, to our non-binary comrades behind bars, who have shown us how to struggle, we extend our solidarity, and we let you know that we will not be deterred by calls for superficial reforms.

The racism embedded in these institutions cannot be eliminated by the use of band-aid solutions. We are determined to initiate a process of reimagining justice. We therefore say "no" to prisons, "no" to police and retributive justice, we say "yes" to critical education, accessible healthcare and transformative justice. We embrace a future liberated from the threat of racist armed police. We embrace a future whose social landscape will no longer be dominated by prisons.

Free Mumia, Free Leonard, Free Our Sisters, Free Them All!