

MEDIA ADVISORY  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **RALLY FOR COMPASSIONATE RELEASE FOR IMPRISONED LAWYER ON OCTOBER 8**

A consortium of area peace and justice groups will rally in Albany at **noon on Tuesday, October 8** to demand compassionate release from federal prison for Lynne Stewart, a well-known human rights lawyer. Stewart is suffering from stage 4 breast cancer; her medical prognosis gives her less than 16 months to live. For the second time she is requesting compassionate release from prison based on her prognosis, so she can go home to her family and receive end-of-life care. October 8 will be Stewart's 74<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The rally will be held outside the **Federal Building, 1 Clinton Ave.**, in downtown Albany. Media is invited to attend. Speakers will include Hon. Douglas Bullock, Albany County legislator; Hon. Dominick Calsolaro, Albany Common Council member; Joe Lombardo, co-chair of the United National Antiwar Coalition; Steve Downs, attorney and executive director of the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms; and two area attorneys known for their human rights advocacy, Kathy Manley and Mark Mishler. The rally is co-sponsored by Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace, Capital Region Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union, Muslim Solidarity Committee, National Lawyers Guild, Project SALAM, Solidarity Committee of the Capital District, Veterans for Peace Chapter 10, and Women Against War.

Lynne Stewart was convicted in 2004 of violating Special Administrative Measures (SAMs) with regard to her client, the Egyptian cleric "Blind Sheik" Omar Abdul Rahman, who was himself convicted in 1995 sting operation of a plot to bomb New York City landmarks and the World Trade Center. She distributed a press release written by Abdul Rahman that released his followers from a previous ceasefire, so they could decide for themselves how to proceed. SAMs, which are designed to severely constrain communication, are selectively imposed by the government on associates of a defendant; Stewart's was the first conviction for material support of terrorism of a defendant's *attorney*, which raised critical constitutional questions about the ability of an attorney to fully represent a client charged with terrorism. Stewart was originally sentenced in 2006 to 28 months in prison, but was free on bail until she was resentenced to a draconian 10-year prison term in 2010. She is incarcerated at the Carswell federal medical prison in Fort Worth, Texas.

Stewart requested compassionate release in April, based on her medical prognosis. Although the request was approved by Carswell's warden, the New York State Parole Board, and the Federal Probation Office in New York, the director of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), Charles Samuels, denied Stewart's request, outrageously claiming that her "health was improving." Stewart appealed to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York City, which denied her appeal, but one of those judges (the same judge who presided over her trial) stated that "[t]he petitioner has appropriately submitted a renewed motion for compassionate release to the BOP, and the court is prepared to give prompt and sympathetic consideration to any motion by the

BOP that seeks compassionate release.” Stewart’s new request, which once again has been approved by Carswell’s warden, is her best chance for release before her death, although it once again depends on Samuels’s approval.

Hundreds of other rallies and demonstrations have been held across the country this past year in support of Stewart; many rallies are scheduled on October 8 in other cities. Among those who support her request for compassionate release are former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Ed Asner, Daniel Berrigan, Liz McAllister Berrigan, Daniel Ellsberg, Noam Chomsky, Cornell West, Dick Gregory, Alice Walker, and Bianca Jagger. Organizations include Center for Constitutional Rights, National Lawyers Guild, and Lawyers Rights Watch Canada.

For more information: <http://www.lynnestewart.org>

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