

# Much Has Been Said.... Mandela, Barghouthi, Peltier, Stewart

Wednesday 8 January 2014, by [FINKEL David](#) (Date first published: 1 January 2014).

MUCH HAS BEEN said in tribute to Nelson Mandela, some of it by self-serving politicians not fit to speak his name, who called Mandela a terrorist when he was buried alive by the apartheid regime for 27 years. It might be a moment to think about some other still-serving political prisoners.

Think about Palestine's living Mandela, Marwan Barghouthi, sentenced to five life terms in an Israeli prison. (The first Palestinian Mandela, Yasir Arafat, was almost certainly murdered on orders of Ariel Sharon.) From his prison cell, Barghouthi issued this tribute to the life of Nelson Mandela [1]

Marwan Barghouthi's name isn't officially spoken — least of all by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper when he rose in the House of Commons on December 5 to eulogize Mandela. Four nights earlier, Harper rapturously addressed a gala Toronto banquet for the Jewish National Fund, arguably the most purely apartheid extant organization on the planet, which controls most of the land in the Israeli state for exclusive use of "the Jewish people of the world" (no non-Jewish citizens of Israel need apply). "Israel will always have Canada," Harper pledged.

Think about political prisoners in U.S. federal custody — to name just two, Native American activist Leonard Peltier, imprisoned since 1977 on a murder conviction that appeals courts have found deeply flawed, repeatedly denied parole and adequate medical care; and Lynne Stewart, 74, sentenced to ten years for her work as the lawyer for Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, suffering terminal cancer and certain to die in prison if her sentence is not commuted. [2]

President Barack Obama takes inspiration from Nelson Mandela, but in the cases of Peltier, Stewart and others has not lifted a finger. When it comes to action, not words, our president fails to show the courage not only of Nelson Mandela, but even FW de Klerk.

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**P.S.**

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## Footnotes

[1] See on ESSF (article 30782), [Marwan Barghouti to Nelson Mandela: "Our Freedom Seems Possible Because You Reached Yours"](#).

[2] Read about Lynne's case at [www.lynnestewart.org](http://www.lynnestewart.org)