

PRISONERS OF FAITH CAMPAIGN PACK



IMAM JAMIL ABDULLAH AL-AMIN

WARNING: Some of the contents of this report deal with torture and may cause distress

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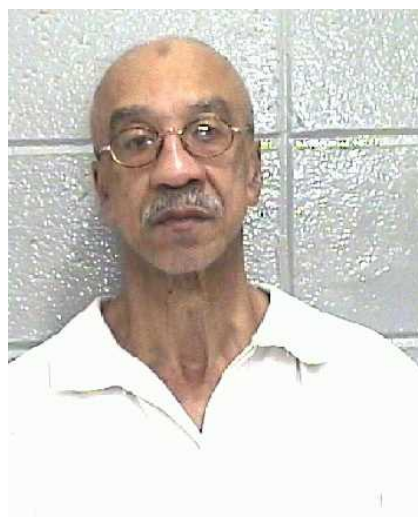
“I have been tormented and persecuted by my enemies for reasons of race and belief. I seek truth over a lie; I seek justice over injustice; I seek righteousness over the rewards of the evil doers; and I love ALLAH more than I love the state.”

- Imam Jamil al-Amin.

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Before: Imam Jamil with his son



After: In prison

Since this campaign pack was produced, Imam Jamil has been convicted of the charges against him and sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. His defence are appealing the decision.

Introduction

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh

Dear Brothers and Sisters

It has been estimated that there are approximately 250,000 Muslim prisoners of faith around the world today, held in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. They can be politicians, members of human rights organisations, students, writers, actors and indeed come from all spheres of life, but have one thing in common in that they have wished to adhere to the Islamic belief and way of life. The government of the country where the prisoners of faith are held often portrays them as terrorists, inciters of religious hatred or of even trying to change the constitution of the country. Once locked away, it is all too easy to forget about these prisoners of faith, who can be subjected to the most extreme and brutal forms of torture. Despite the various human rights treaties which have been ratified by governments to protect the right of an individual not to be subjected to torture and the countless UN resolutions banning its use, this practice still continues, largely ignored by the international community. The right not to be tortured is non-derogable, meaning in all situations even in a state of emergency this right must be guaranteed.

IHRC's prisoner of faith campaigns have been running since the organisation began and continue and complement the work of many dedicated campaigns world-wide. More packs will be made available. Please check our website and go to the campaigns page at www.ihrc.org.uk or contact us via email at info@ihrc.org.

The Letter Writing Campaign

IHRC's campaign for prisoners of faith is based on a letter writing campaign. We have found this to be an effective method of applying pressure to different governmental organisations, (national and international), bodies such as the United Nations, European Commission of Human Rights and other similar organisations. They are currently failing to exert pressure on member countries which have pledged to uphold human rights values.

Questions that have been asked in the past concerning the campaign have included:

- What difference will one letter make?
- Does it really work?
- Will we get in trouble writing the letters, since *they* will have our contact details?

It is true that one letter may end up being ignored by the recipient. At least the person who sent it will be able to answer on the Day of Judgement that s/he made a stand against injustice to try to help the prisoners. However letters sent in their hundreds cannot be ignored. One MP stated that if his constituency receives even five letters on the same topic, a meeting is convened to answer the question at hand. Of course this may be the policy of one of the "better" MPs, but the fact remains that hundreds of letters demanding to know why a certain prisoner of faith is being detained and tortured for no other reason than wishing to practice his/her religion must generate a response which can then be taken further.

In fact it was due to a sustained letter writing campaign that the Turkish journalist Gul Aslan, held for three years without charge in Bandirma prison was released in August 1999; the judge presiding over her trial stated that her case was an international embarrassment. Thousands of prisoners of faith have also been released in Bahrain, India and Nigeria after similar campaigns.

Huda Kaya, whilst held in Malatya Prison in July 1999, after participating in a rally against the hijab ban, wrote the following to IHRC:

“We are so proud to see that you are interested in the problems of Muslims in Turkey who are living the basic principle of Islam that only the momineen are brothers...Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a strong and compact wall (Surah Saff-4/Holy Qur'an)...And again by using IHRC, I am sending salaam to all those valuable momineen brothers and sisters. WE ARE WAITING FOR YOUR LETTERS.”

Al-Hamdullillah, Huda Kaya and her daughters who faced the death penalty for participating in the rally were released from prison in December 1999.

Many people do feel slightly apprehensive about writing letters to different governmental organisations about prisoners of faith. Letter writing is a tool widely used by human rights organisations and is a fundamental basic right aligned to freedom of speech.

Model letters are provided for each of the prisoners of faith, which can be sent directly or adjusted as necessary to include further details. We ask that if you do receive a reply to send **a copy of the letter sent (even if it is the model letter) and the reply to IHRC**. This is extremely important as it helps IHRC to monitor the situation with regards to the prisoner of faith and to improve upon the current model letters. Please also keep letters polite.

Letter writing campaigns take time to become established, but Insha'Allah further results will be obtained. However, the success of the campaign is dependent upon the number of people committing to it. More campaigners need to get involved, on a regular basis. The campaign can then be extended to include e.g. vigils and protests at different embassies to raise awareness and Insha'Allah obtain the release of the prisoner of faith.

Finally we ask you to remember these and the many thousand other prisoners of faith in your du'as – imprisoned simply for their beliefs.

Why Campaign with the Islamic Human Rights Commission?

As Muslims, we have an undeniable responsibility to struggle against oppression and injustice, and to work for a world based on principles of equity and compassion. To do so, Muslims must first of all be aware of the current state of affairs in the world at large, an obligation that has been indicated by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as follows: “Whoever wakes up in the morning not thinking about the affairs of the Ummah (community) is not one of us.” (Muslim)

The Qur’an clearly points out that Muslims must fight against oppression in all forms, be it against Muslim or non-Muslim: *“And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men, women and children (of) those who say: Our Lord! Cause us to go forth from this town, whose people are oppressors, and give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper.”* (Qur’an 4:75) This verse shows that Muslims have a responsibility to aid the oppressed regardless of the faith or ethnicity of both the oppressed and the oppressor.

Indeed, the Prophet (SAW) has clearly stated that refusing to struggle against oppression and injustice could be tantamount to becoming an oppressor and even exiting the fold of Islam. “Whoever goes along with an oppressor and strengthens his hands, knowing that he is an oppressor, has taken himself out of the fold of Islam.” (from ‘Aws ibn Sharahbil, by al-Bayhaqi in his *Shu’ab al-Iman*; cited in *Mishkat* (1381 AH), Vol. 2, p. 641:5136) “Whoever sees something wrong should use his strength to set it right; if he cannot, he should speak against it; and if he cannot it, he should at least consider it wrong in his heart; and this is the weakest of faith.” (Muslim, from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, Vol. 1, p. 69:78, *Kitab al-Iman*)

Thus, it is clear that genuine adherence to Islam inherently entails committed activism against all forms of injustice and oppression. This includes standing up against those who perpetrate and promulgate injustice regardless of whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim, and striving to protect the rights of all people from oppression once more regardless of ethnicity or religion.

The question then arises as to the best methodology we should implement to fulfil the obligation outlined above. Once more, the Qur’an and the Prophet (SAW) have made clear the best means of doing so. First of all, the Qur’an states that it is an obligation for Muslims to form groups or organisations through which they may exhort to what is right and denounce wrong: *“Let there be among you a group that invites to the good, enjoins what is right and forbids what is evil, and they are those who are successful.”* (Qur’an 3:104) In other words, Muslims should form structured organisations through which they can call upon all relevant parties to implement justice and avoid injustice - the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) strives to be just such an organisation. This is a universal obligation that Muslims have been commanded to fulfil by Allah (SWT) in relation to all individuals, communities and groups, both Muslim and non-Muslim without exception. This therefore necessarily includes calling on international organisations such as the United Nations and NATO; national organisations such as human rights groups and think-tanks; governments and non-governmental organisations; state and non-state institutions; and so on, to implement justice and avoid injustice. It is the obligation of Muslims to make significant contact with all such national and international bodies to encourage and exhort them to practice justice, and finally to denounce and condemn any of their unjust practices.

Indeed, the Prophet (SAW) has quite specifically highlighted the merits of speaking out directly to the perpetrator or supporter of oppression. This is done by condemning their oppressive behaviour, recommending to them the most just practice in relation to this behaviour, and calling upon them to reform their behaviour according to justice by implementing this recommendation. The Prophet (SAW) stated: “The best Jihad is the word of truth spoken in the presence of a tyrant ruler” (narrated by Ahmad). Indeed, this sort of direct activism against oppression may not necessarily be literal and physical. Research and campaigning through writing in order to fulfil the obligation outlined above has also been highly praised by the Prophet (SAW), and therefore must include contacting relevant groups and organisations to demand that they adhere to justice. This has been directly alluded to in the

statement of the Prophet (SAW) quoted above: “Whoever sees something wrong should use his strength to set it right; if he cannot, he should speak against it...”

The next question with regards to methodology is how to call upon these groups, bodies and organisations in an effective and convincing manner. It is well known that when the Prophets (AS) fulfilled their mission to preach the message of Islam to the different communities to which they came, they did so deliberately in a language and terminology which they could best understand. In other words, they gauged the intellectual and rational background of their listeners and tailored their preaching so that listeners were able to comprehend the Prophets’ message.

This has even entailed utilising the ideology of the listeners in such a way as to use the concepts and terminology which they are already familiar with, to prove a correct concept. For example, the Qur’an relates that Prophet Ibrahim (AS), in conversation with his people, utilised the concepts and terminology of the paganist worldview to prove the Islamic worldview. (*Qur’an* 6:75-79, 7:80-83, 41:47)

In a similar fashion, it is possible to highlight the unjust practices of governments, organisations and individuals using concepts and terminology that they understand - such as the prevailing human rights discourse - so as to prove their unjust nature. The objective of doing so would simply be to demonstrate their hypocrisy in failing to adhere to the very humanitarian principles which they themselves claim to uphold, by pointing out the discrepancy between their behaviour and the basic rights of human beings.

Where the Divinely-ordained rights of human beings correlate with rights recognised internationally, it makes sense to call upon national and international bodies to implement such rights. This would serve greatly to help fulfil our Islamic responsibility to struggle against global injustice and oppression, to protect the intrinsic rights of Muslims worldwide, and to promote justice and equity. In this way, we would be pressuring existing international instruments to act in accordance with justice. As the Prophet stated in a famous hadith: “The similitude of the believers is like a single body. If any part of it complains of an injury, the entire body responds.” Campaigning with IHRC can help make this response effective.

There are many examples proving that Muslim pressure can have an impact. For example, the Zionist Lord Michael Levy was temporarily sidelined from his position as Tony Blair’s Middle East envoy. This occurred in the wake of the Foreign Office having received up to over a thousand letters from IHRC campaigners. Lord Levy’s sidelining was widely reported in the press by newspapers such as the *Times* and the *Independent*. Although Lord Levy was later returned to his position, it remains clear that this sort of pressure can work.

Similarly, when a number of Turkish Sisters were jailed for undertaking a peaceful protest against the ban on Hijab in schools and universities, IHRC volunteers were asked to send letters to several organisations and leaders, including Mary Robinson, the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Turkish sisters, who had the death sentence levelled against them, were soon released when the UN intervened under pressure from IHRC campaigners to prevent them from being killed.

Another recent example is that of Oxfam, when it announced that it will not renew its contract with pro-Zionist Starbucks after immense pressure from various human rights groups led by IHRC.

Yet another example is that of the recent success in the case of Mirza Tahir Hussain whose imminent death sentence was commuted owing to great efforts by many governmental bodies and co-ordinated by IHRC.

There are many other examples. Campaigning can work if enough consistent, determined and widespread pressure can be imposed on political leaders and organisations. IHRC believes that it is our

responsibility to call these leaders and organisations to account for their policies and actions, and to exhort them to act in accordance with justice.

Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin

IHRC joined the campaign to support Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin in August 2001. Although the case has been reported widely in the American media and Imam Jamil has received support from the major Muslim groups in America, little is known in the UK about Imam Jamil.

Background

Imam Jamil (formerly known as H. Rap Brown) was one of the most articulate and outspoken critics of the tyranny and oppression perpetuated by the Jim Crow laws of the 1960's which served to legally segregate whites from blacks. Known as a bold and daring fighter for the rights of the oppressed and unjustly treated, he was accorded the same status by media personalities and law-enforcement officials as that given to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcom X). During this period, Imam Jamil received his 'violent' label by these individuals who sought to demean his advocacy of self-defence against US government-induced terrorism against the black communities and racist Ku Klux Klan activities.

Throughout the 1970's, 80's, and 90's, Imam Jamil has proven himself to be an outstanding Islamic leader as exemplified through the following:

- Establishment of the first mosque in the city of Atlanta, Georgia where the five compulsory prayers are regularly performed to this day. The establishment of this mosque has been credited with helping radically to eliminate crime in an area that was once crime infested, due to the leadership of Imam Jamil, and the help of Allah. In addition, the Islamic community of the west end regularly adheres to the payment of Zakat (charitable contributions to the poor).
- Efforts to uniformly recognize the beginning and ending of the Holy Month of Ramadan and the successive Eid celebrations.
- Organizing mass pilgrimages to Mecca (Hajj) from the western hemisphere.
- Promotion of safe streets and efforts to eliminate drug trafficking and related crimes throughout the west end of Atlanta, as well as other communities nationwide.
- Establishment of the United Peace Initiative (UPI) and the Unity Truce among street gangs throughout the United States.
- Initiation of city, state, and nationwide Islamic Leadership Councils.

The Case

Imam Jamil was charged with 13 counts of murder and felony murder in March 2000 after shootings outside his grocery store earlier in the same month which resulted in one deputy being killed. Ultimately, he was found guilty of all 13 counts and sentenced to life imprisonment without parole.

The media coverage that followed the shootings made a fair trial look impossible even before September 11, 2001 (the original jury selection was to begin on September 12). The judge presiding over the trial, Judge Stephanie B. Manis granted a continuance for the new trial date to begin on January 7, 2002. Jury selection began by Judge Manis calling 1500 potential jurors, more than three times the usual number to form a 12 member jury.¹

¹ Marina Jimenez, 'Muslims rally around former Black Panther Accused of killing deputy: Atlanta murder trial seen as test in wake of Sept. 11', *The National Post*, January 10 2002, <http://www.nationalpost.com/home/story.html?f=/stories/20020110/1087248.html>

The trial followed the extremely muddled and chaotic investigation of the shootings in which flaws have been well documented. On March 16 2000 (Eid al-Adha), two deputies Ricky Kinchen and Aldranon English arrived at Imam Jamil's grocery store in the West End neighbourhood of Atlanta. They were to serve him with a warrant for failing to appear in Cobb County Court earlier in January. (The warrant related to three charges in May 1999; Imam Jamil had previously refuted all the charges made against him).

According to media reports in the next few days, the two deputies, not finding Imam Jamil in the store, drove around the block and upon returning parked near the store, where a black Mercedes was also parked nearby. The deputies asked the man in the black Mercedes to show them his hands, concerned they could not see what he was doing. Firing began at this point; Deputy Kinchen died from gunshot wounds the following day at Grady Memorial Hospital but Deputy English survived, spending days in intensive care at the same hospital. It was within hours of receiving emergency surgery that Deputy English identified Imam Jamil from a photo line up as the assailant who shot him and his partner.²

Imam Jamil was charged with 13 counts of murder and felony murder by Fulton County Grand Jury in March 2000.³ In May 2000 the district attorney proceeded to ask for the death penalty, as had been expected, since an officer had been killed in the line of duty.

Some of the many contradictory findings that have emerged since the shootings are below:

- Both deputies claimed to have shot Imam Jamil on 16 March 2000, once shooting at the two deputies began. According to various media reports within the next few days, a trail of blood followed by the officers led to an empty house around the corner. Within the next week reports had changed with police denying that a trail of blood had been found altogether. Instead, blood was found at the empty house and the blood at the scene of the crime was old and unrelated to the shootings.⁴ Changes in the reports coincided well with the fact that when examined, Imam Jamil was free from any wounds that could have been caused as a result of being shot.⁵
- The warrant used to search Imam Jamil's house was obtained using 'common knowledge around the office that blood had been found'⁶ The police sergeant who had obtained the search warrant testified in court that he had unintentionally lied about the trail of blood, in order to get the warrant.⁷
- Deputy English stated after the shootings that the attacker had 'gray [sic] eyes'⁸ whereas Imam Jamil's eyes are brown.
- A possible suspect and / or witness was overlooked by the prosecution, possibly deliberately. Otis Jackson, in April 2000 was in the process of being extradited to Nevada, on an unrelated charge when he told an officer he had been involved in the shooting of an officer in Georgia. This claim was not investigated until over two months later and ended with Otis Jackson signing a confession, where he admitted to shooting a police officer. He mentioned details including how the officers had tried to serve Imam Jamil with a warrant, how he [Otis Jackson] began fighting with one of the officers and the shooting that ensued. Otis Jackson also stated the make of the gun he used for the

² El-Hajj Mauri' Saalakahn, Director, The Peace and Justice Foundation, 'Analysis of Otis Jackson's Confessions', <http://www.imamjamil.com>

³ Jack Warner, 'Al-Amin indicted on 13 counts', *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 3.29.2000

⁴ Amina Saeed, 'Too Much Contradictory Evidence in Imam Jamil Al-Amin Case', <http://www.imamjamil.com>

⁵ Coalition for Imam Jamil, Metro Washington, D.C-Area, '7 facts concerning allegations against Imam Jamil', fact 6, <http://www.imamjamil.com>

⁶ Steve Visser, 'Al-Amin supporters blast police', *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3.28.2001

⁷ Linn Washington Jnr, 'Mistaken Identity or Guilty While Black', *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 17 July 2001

⁸ *ibid*

shootings whose casing matched the casings found at the scene.⁹ However within days of his confession, it was announced that Otis Jackson has recanted it. His recantation was immediately accepted and further investigations were not made despite Otis Jackson's detailed knowledge of the events on the night of 16 March 2000. He was not even allowed to meet the defence team.¹⁰

- In June 2000 it was reported that police officers admitted the patrol car used by Deputies Kinchen and English had been repaired and now could not be used as evidence by Imam Jamil's defence. The police had claimed that Imam Jamil stood on the right side of the police car when he fired upon the officers, but bullet holes were found on the left side of the car.¹¹ In addition to this car, two other cars parked near the site of the shootings, also containing bullet holes were not examined by the defence. One was never impounded and the other remains in police custody.¹²

The Freedom of Information Act revealed that there are over 44,000 documents compiled on Imam Jamil's life since the 1960s when he was known as H Rap Brown¹³, which Imam Jamil himself has made reference to on several occasions. The media coverage of Imam Jamil has conveyed him as being 'some kind of gun-toting, irresponsible Black thug'¹⁴, according to a close friend of his. Imam Jamil himself said in his statement of innocence that for over 30 years he has been "...tormented and persecuted for reasons of race and belief" and now "...They have done their level best to reduce me to a one-dimensional monster that is a composite of a Black Panther..., a cop killer, and the fictional character of the Godfather..."¹⁵

All these connotations have been projected, even though since his conversion to Islam in 1971, Imam Jamil has worked hard for the Muslim community in America. He established the Community Mosque of Atlanta and in 1983 formed the National Islamic Community, an amalgamation of 30 mosques. Friends have described Imam Jamil as humble and respectful and he has been widely credited on the work he has undertaken with '...ridding his neighbourhood of drug dealers...' ¹⁶ Perhaps then, it is not difficult to believe him when he stated, after his arrest in Alabama, "It's a government conspiracy".¹⁷

Due to a gagging order placed by Judge Manis in August 2000, Imam Jamil has not been able to proclaim publicly his innocence.¹⁸ She ruled against lifting the gagging order a year later in August 2001.¹⁹

In December 2001, Imam Jamil sent a letter to the Community Mosque in Atlanta, proclaiming his innocence. He wrote of the value of human life, stating "...Allah and only Allah is the author of life and death..." He described state executions as "...little more than ritual murders that mock justice..." and compared them to "...the ancient practice of human sacrifice." The letter ended with, "Let us not serve as handmaidens to power and principalities but as stewards of life and devoted servants of Allah."²⁰

⁹ El-Hajj Mauri' Saalakahn, Director, The Peace and Justice Foundation, 'Analysis of Otis Jackson's Confessions', <http://www.imamjamil.com>, see also Brian Cabell and the Associated Press, 'Atlanta area officer dies after shootout: 1960s militant sought', cnn.com, 17 March 2000

¹⁰ 'New Developments in the Case of Jamil Al-Amin', 25 February 2007, <http://blog.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.view&friendID=114462347&blogID=234565084&MyToken=46050b16-c0dc-4a7b-ab8d-b26d918c256f>

¹¹ Linn Washington Jnr, 'Mistaken Identity or Guilty While Black', *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 17 July 2001

¹² Joshua B Good, 'Judge rules against lifting Al-Amin gag order', *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 8.17.2001

¹³ email rec'd by IHRC 'Pre-Trial Court Hearing State of Georgia v Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin', 19 May 2001

¹⁴ 'Four Muslim leaders on the case of Imam Jamil al-Amin', <http://www.imamjamil.com>

¹⁵ 'H. Rap Brown/Jamil Al-Amin: A Profoundly American Story', *The Nation*, 28 February 2002

¹⁶ Linn Washington Jnr, 'Mistaken Identity or Guilty While Black', *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 17 July 2001

¹⁷ Brian Cabell and the Associated Press, 'Lawyer for former Black Panther leader Al-Amin says client is innocent', 21 March, 2000, <http://www.cnn.com>

¹⁸ Joshua B Good, 'Judge says gag order applies to Al-Amin', *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 8.16.2000

¹⁹ Joshua B Good, 'Judge rules against lifting Al-Amin gag order', *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 8.17.2001

²⁰ Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, 'Text of Al-Amin's letter to congregation' *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1.05.2002, Full text of letter can be viewed at <http://www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/metro/alamina/010502letter.html>

At the beginning of January 2002, several newspapers published portions of a 20 minute interview Imam Jamil gave by telephone from Fulton County jail. He stated that the FBI had found nothing from the 44,000 documents they had gathered over him, so "...at some point, they had to make something happen to justify all the investigations and all the money they've spent."²¹ He did not discuss the shootings on 16 March 2000, but emphasised that it was his embracing of Islam that led to his arrest. He again criticised the gagging order stating "I can't even say I'm innocent. Do you know of any other defendant who is not allowed to say he is innocent?"

As a result of the telephone interview Imam Jamil was found in contempt of court. Judge Manis stated that the timing of the comments would prejudice potential jurors. For a period of about 4 weeks, Imam Jamil was not allowed to make telephone calls from the jail, send any letters or receive visitors other than his lawyers, until jury selection was completed.²²

He was held in solitary confinement in Fulton County jail and denied the one hour break outside which is designated to all detainees, in fear of violating the gagging order.

The opening arguments in the case were made on 18 February 2002. In spite of the irregularities Imam Jamil was found guilty on 9 March 2002 on all 13 counts. On 14 March 2002, the jury rejected rendering a death sentence and voted instead to sentence Imam Jamil to life imprisonment without parole.

On 24 March 2004, the Georgia Supreme Court affirmed the conviction. In June 2004, the Georgia Supreme Court denied Imam Jamil's Motion for Reconsideration. On 27 September 2004, Imam Jamil filed a petition for a writ of certiorari in the US Supreme Court but it refused to hear the case.

Further information about the case of Imam Jamil can be found at the following links:

<http://www.icsija.tk>

<http://www.imamjamil.com>

<http://www.myspace.com/freetheimam>

Latest Developments of Imam Jamil Amin's Case

After seven years of solitary confinement at the State Prison in Reidsville, Georgia, the Imam is still in high spirits and hopeful of his release. His comments that "They ain't make me ... so they can't break me"²³ has inspired his supporters.

However, he is not being treated in accordance with international human rights standards as is evident from the list of grievances that he has filed against the State Prison over conditions and policies that violate his human rights. The list of grievances includes:

- Denial of basic human rights
- Confinement to a cell for 23 hours everyday: when allowed out of the cell, he is kept in a cage which is covered with a fence
- Denial of due process: held in administrative segregation since arrival at facility while official reason is listed as a violation of dress code for an inspection which took place eighteen months after confinement

²¹ David Firestone, '60's Firebrand, Now Imam, Is Going on Trial in Killing', *The New York Times*, January 6 2002

²² Lateef Mungin and Alan Judd, 'Al-Amin held in contempt for interviews'. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1.06.2002

²³ International Committee to Support Imam Jamil Al-Amin (ICSIIJA), 'Community Report and Update 2007', <http://web.mac.com/powerportraits/iWeb/Site%203/COMMUNITY%20REPORT.html>

- Denial of religious rights including participation in any communal Islamic practice, attending Jummah prayers and serving as Imam to prisoner and employee population at the prison
- Denial of legal rights: his legal mail is still interfered with despite a court order
- Sexual abuse: He is forced to strip and is searched in presence of female employees

The prison is also trying to bring into effect a media black out on Imam Jamil. All interviews with known writers, newspapers, magazines, radio and TV channels, internet services or any other known forms of public information have been blocked.

However, on a positive note, new evidence which has been revealed through sources close to Imam Jamil, offers great encouragement and hope for his case. It has been discovered that Otis Jackson, who had previously confessed to the crime of shooting the two Fulton County Sheriffs but then had recanted, has now disclosed in a letter that 'he never recanted his confession, rather it was recanted for him.'²⁴ His letter states:

“Unfortunately the law enforcement officials wanted him [Imam Jamil] and so they were willing to let me walk on the death of one of their own...I looked into the eyes of English so he must remember me but he was never...[shown]...my picture and I never recanted anything, they recanted for me. I pray to Allah (SWT) that this murder is taken off of the Imam and put on the right person [i.e.] me.”²⁵

Hence not only has Jackson admitted to the crime but he is willing to accept the punishment as well. This recent discovery clearly proves Imam Jamil's innocence, but it also reveals the injustice of the US judicial system which is adamant upon detaining an innocent man and willing to let the offender go free.

In light of this new evidence, Imam Jamil's habeas corpus hearing which was held on 27 February 2007²⁶ concluded on a positive note and his case still remains open. The new hearing date will be rescheduled within the next four months. If he is granted a new trial, at least two hundred thousand dollars will be needed to assure minimal legal representation. If he is denied the trial then his case will have to be pursued at the federal level.

²⁴ 'New Developments in the Case of Jamil Al-Amin', 25 February 2007,
<http://blog.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.view&friendID=114462347&blogID=234565084&MyToken=46050b16-c0dc-4a7b-ab8d-b26d918c256f>

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ 'Update! Outcome of Yesterday's Hearing!', 28 February 2007,
<http://blog.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.view&friendID=114462347&blogID=235888104&MyToken=92f482b5-c67b-4d14-a887-e74faf7a4add>

How to Support Imam Jamil²⁷:

The International Committee to Support Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (ICSJIA) has asked supporters to do the following to assist in freeing Imam Jamil:

- Make Du'a (prayers) for Imam Jamil and his family, his community and his supporters. Make it a habit to remember Imam Jamil in your Du'a daily.
- Collect data about the Imam and his legal case. Collect information about the character and history of the Muslim community under his leadership. Find out how he has contributed to Islam in America as a Muslim for the last two decades. This will give you a clearer understanding of why defending him is so important.
- Distribute the data; engage others in discussions where these individuals show an interest in Imam Jamil's case.
- Engage in fund-raising activities, sell books, audio/visual materials, t-shirts and make appeals for contributions. Donate to Imam Jamil's legal defence fund (details below).
- Organise a programme in your mosque or community centre about Imam Jamil. Make sure to raise funds at the event.
- Ask your mosque to dedicate one Friday sermon to talk about the case and appeal for funds for the case.
- Publicise the case on the internet and in local and national newspapers.
- Put up a poster or flier in your mosque asking people to log on to <http://www.imamjamil.com> or <http://www.myspace.com/freetheimam>.
- Make sure his books are part of your local and school library. Check out the bookshelves and see if they're carrying his writing. If not, write a polite letter to the librarian about your discovery and explain why the school should purchase his books and how students will learn from them. Get other students and teachers involved.
- Donate to financially support the family of Imam Jamil (details below).
- Write letters of support and encouragement to Imam Jamil.

Financial contributions can be sent to the following:

- To assist in Imam Jamil's appeals process:

The Justice Fund
P.O. Box 93963
Atlanta, GA 30377
- To assist in the support of his family:

Amir Sahib Abdul-Salaam
185 Indian Creek Road
Tyler, Alabama 36785
(In memo section of check write: Al-Amin family)
- To assist in his son's education:

Karima Al-Amin
420 14th Street, NW, Suite 205
Atlanta, GA 30318
(In memo section of check, write: Education)

²⁷ See <http://www.myspace.com/freetheimam> and <http://www.icsija.tk/>

Address for letters of support for Imam Jamil

Imam Jamil al-Amin (GDC 0001104651)
 Georgia State Prison
 100 Highway 147
 Reidsville
 GA 39499-9701
 USA

Instructions for Sending Model Letter

Please send the model letter with chosen insertions to the addresses below. Addresses for the recipients are given immediately after the model letters.

Model Letters for Imam Jamil

1) Letter to UN Commissioner on Human Rights or FCO

Name
 Address

Date

[Name of Recipient]
 [Address of Recipient]

Dear [Name of Recipient]

I am writing to you regarding Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, who is currently held in solitary confinement at the State Prison in Reidsville, Georgia, USA after being sentenced to life imprisonment for charges of 13 counts of murder and felony murder. He has been charged with shooting two deputies on 16 March 2000, one of whom, Deputy Ricky Kinchen, died as a result of the shootings.

The Freedom of Information Act revealed that there are over 44,000 FBI documents on Imam Jamil since the early 1960s. He has been under surveillance most of his life.

However, many contradictory findings have emerged since the shootings which need to be addressed. I am extremely concerned regarding the following points which have been raised throughout the investigation:

- Even though both deputies claimed to have shot Imam Jamil, after examination, there were no injuries found on his body that could have resulted from being shot.
- Deputy English stated that the assailants eyes were grey, whereas Imam Jamil's eyes are brown
- A sergeant had lied in order to obtain a warrant to search Imam Jamil's premises
- The deputies patrol car had been repaired before it could be used as evidence by the defence
- Otis Jackson confessed to the crime of shooting the deputies; however it was later announced that he has recanted his confession and hence he was acquitted. He has recently publicly confessed to the crime again and has revealed that he never recanted his confession rather it was recanted for him.

Throughout his life, Imam Jamil Amin has proven himself to be an exemplary Muslim leader. He established the first Muslim community mosque in Atlanta. His friends describe him as a humble and respectful person and he is widely credited for the good work he has undertaken in his neighbourhood. Hence such a person who has made efforts to spread peace in his community cannot possibly have committed the murder of another human being.

I am also concerned about Imam Jamil's treatment in prison. He has filed a list of grievances against the State Prison over conditions and policies that violate his human rights. He has faced religious, sexual and legal abuse in prison.

I request you to intercede in Imam Jamil's case and pressurize the American government to offer Imam Jamil a fair trial based on the facts of the case and to give him his full civil rights while he is held in prison.

[INSERT APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH]

I look forward to an early reply

Yours sincerely

[Name]

Insertions

Recipient Name: Ms Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner on Human Rights

INSERTION

Please ensure the appropriate working groups in your office act upon this matter.

Recipient Name: Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett MP, FCO

INSERTION

Please make representations on behalf of Imam Jamil. Your department has committed itself to promoting human rights and in this circumstance there has been a clear travesty of justice, where Imam Jamil's human rights have been abused.

2) Letter to Prison Warden for Georgia State Prison

Name
Address

Date

Warden Hugh Smith
Georgia State Prison
300 First Avenue South
Reidsville, GA 30453
USA

Dear Mr. Hugh Smith,

I am writing to you regarding Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, who is currently held in solitary confinement at the State Prison in Reidsville, after being sentenced to life imprisonment for charges of 13 counts of murder and felony murder. He has been charged with shooting two deputies on 16 March 2000, one of whom, Deputy Ricky Kinchen, died as a result of the shootings.

It has been brought to my notice that Imam Jamil's human rights are being violated at your prison. The list of grievances filed by Imam Jamil in relation to these violations includes:

- Denial of basic human rights
- Confinement to a cell for 23 hours everyday: when allowed out of the cell, he is kept in a cage which is covered with a fence
- Denial of due process: held in administrative segregation since arrival at facility while official reason is listed as a violation of dress code for an inspection which took place eighteen months after confinement
- Denial of religious rights including participation in any communal Islamic practice, attending Jummah prayers and serving as Imam to prisoner and employee population at the prison
- Denial of legal rights: his legal mail is still interfered with despite a court order
- Sexual abuse: He is forced to strip and is searched in presence of female employees

I urge you to ensure that the above mentioned complaints are thoroughly investigated and that any prison official guilty of meting out such treatment is prosecuted. Further please ensure that Imam Jamil's human rights are protected and that he has freedom to practice his religion, legal rights etc.

It has also come to my notice that the prison is trying to bring into effect a media black out on Imam Jamil and that all interviews with known writers, newspapers, magazines, radio and TV channels, internet services or any other known forms of public information have been blocked.

I urge you to ensure that Imam Jamil's right to free speech is not violated and that he is allowed access to all media channels.

Please ensure that you follow the international human rights standards in dealing with Imam Jamil Amin.

I look forward to hearing from you soon on this matter,

Yours Sincerely,

[Name]

3) Letter to Commissioner for Georgia Department of Corrections

Name
Address

Date

Commissioner James E. Donald
Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC)
#2 MLK Junior Drive,

East Tower 8th Floor,
Atlanta, GA 30344
USA

Dear Mr. James Donald,

I am writing to you regarding Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, who is currently held in solitary confinement at the State Prison in Reidsville, Georgia (GDC ID: 0001104651) after being sentenced to life imprisonment for charges of 13 counts of murder and felony murder. He has been charged with shooting two deputies on 16 March 2000, one of whom, Deputy Ricky Kinchen, died as a result of the shootings.

It has been brought to my notice that Imam Jamil's human rights are being violated in prison. Your organization's mission statement asserts that it is 'providing effective opportunities for offenders to achieve positive change.' But in Imam Jamil's case the reality is contrary to this mission statement. Firstly, he has been classified as an offender when in fact he is innocent. Secondly, he is facing a great deal of persecution in prison as is evident by the following list of grievances filed by him:

- Denial of basic human rights
- Confinement to a cell for 23 hours everyday: when allowed out of the cell, he is kept in a cage which is covered with a fence
- Denial of due process: held in administrative segregation since arrival at facility while official reason is listed as a violation of dress code for an inspection which took place eighteen months after confinement
- Denial of religious rights including participation in any communal Islamic practice, attending Jumma prayers and serving as Imam to prisoner and employee population at the prison
- Denial of legal rights: his legal mail is still interfered with despite a court order
- Sexual abuse: He is forced to strip and is searched in presence of female employees

I urge you to ensure that the above mentioned complaints are thoroughly investigated and that any prison official guilty of meting out such treatment is prosecuted. Further please ensure that Imam Jamil's human rights are protected and that he has freedom to practice his religion, legal rights etc.

It has also come to my notice that the prison is trying to bring into effect a media black out on Imam Jamil and that all interviews with known writers, newspapers, magazines, radio and TV channels, internet services or any other known forms of public information have been blocked. I urge you to ensure that Imam Jamil's right to free speech is not violated and that he is allowed access to all media channels.

I would again like to remind you of your mission statement of offering positive opportunities to detainees. Please ensure that this mission statement is fulfilled and brought into practice in Imam Jamil's case. Please ensure that the State Prison in Reidsville follows the international human rights standards in dealing with Imam Jamil Amin.

I look forward to hearing from you soon on this matter,

Yours Sincerely,

[Name]

Addresses for Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin Model Letters

- Ms Louise Arbour
UN High Commissioner on Human Rights
Petitions Team
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Fax: + 41 22 917 9022 (particularly for urgent matters)
Email: tb-petitions.hchr@unog.ch
- Ms. Margaret Beckett MP
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Fax: +44 20 7839 2417
Email private.office@fco.gov.uk
- Warden Hugh Smith
Georgia State Prison
300 First Avenue South
Reidsville, GA 30453
USA
- Commissioner James E. Donald
Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC)
#2 MLK Junior Drive
East Tower 8th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30344
USA