

# **ON THE UNJUST PROSECUTION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO 8**

## **STATEMENT FROM SUPERVISORS ERIC MAR, JOHN AVALOS, AND CHRIS DALY**

**August 27, 2009**

### **To Attorney General Jerry Brown:**

We want to express our deep concern over the unjust, costly and flawed prosecution of the San Francisco 8.

Based on “confessions” and other testimony extracted by torture and denial of right to counsel, this prosecution has been a disservice to the people of San Francisco.

For the last six years, prosecution of this case has ripped respected elders from their families and from their community service. It has exacted an incalculable toll on all of them.

The cost of this case to the people of San Francisco has now run into the millions of dollars.

The results to date of this prosecution speak to its inherent weakness and injustice:

- On July 6, your office was forced to drop all charges against four of the San Francisco 8 (Ray Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Hank Jones and Harold Taylor), acknowledging that you had “insufficient evidence” to prosecute them.
- Your office had already been forced to drop all charges a year earlier against a fifth member of the SF8, Richard O’Neal.

- Your office offered and accepted pleas to greatly reduced charges from two other SF 8 defendants, Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim, in exchange for time served and probation.

Francisco Torres is now the only remaining SF 8 defendant. Your office also offered him probation and time served in exchange for a plea to a lesser charge. He refused your offer, and maintains his innocence.

Mr. Torres was born in Puerto Rico and raised in New York City. He is a Vietnam Veteran who fought for the rights of Black and Latino soldiers upon his return to the states. A former member of the Black Panther Party, he has been a long-time community activist and mentor to youth. He is a husband, a father and a grandfather.

Previous attempts to prosecute this case were dismissed in 1975 when it was revealed that so-called “confessions” were the product of torture by the New Orleans police department.

As members of the Board of Supervisors, we reiterate our opposition to the use of torture against any suspects.

In the name of fairness and justice and human rights, we urge you to reconsider the continuation of this misguided prosecution.

**Signed By:**

**Supervisor Eric Mar**  
**Supervisor John Avalos**  
**Supervisor Chris Daly**