

Dear Honorable Judge Drain,

We write to you on behalf of Ms. Rasmea Odeh, who was recently convicted in your court of unlawfully procuring naturalization. We understand that Ms. Odeh faces deportation and up to ten years in prison. Your Honor, we implore you to show Ms. Odeh, a 67-year-old woman who has been a grandmother to many of us, mercy in determining her sentence. We believe such mercy is deserved by Ms. Odeh's age, spotless record during her time in the United States, and her selfless devotion to the Chicago community, making one of America's greatest cities a better place to live, particularly for Arab Americans and recent Arab immigrants.

Ms. Odeh grew up in Palestine, where she and her family endured tremendous trauma; it is no secret that she suffered weeks of sexual assault and torture in 1968 at the hands of the Israeli military. As you recognized in one of your pre-trial orders, Ms. Odeh's claims of sexual assault and torture in Israeli custody are "credible." Indeed, we know these claims to be more than credible: they actually bear testament to Ms. Odeh's strength, courage, and steadfastness.

While we understand that Ms. Odeh was found to have violated US law by a jury of her peers, we know that Ms. Odeh is much more than this conviction alone. And it is our hope that you see Ms. Odeh not as a convicted felon, too but as a proud woman who has served as an inspiration to hundreds of similarly situated women, some of whom are also survivors of sexual assault and torture. She is our matriarch and we adore her.

We are reaching out to you because we are confident that you will see Ms. Odeh as a person, one who made a mistake, but who is not a hardened criminal deserving of harsh punishment and lengthy incarceration. Ms. Odeh is not only a beloved member of the Chicago and US Palestinian community, she is also a productive US citizen and a critical member of the broader Chicago progressive community. Despite the hardship she has faced throughout her life, Ms. Odeh is a force for social change, peace, and love toward everything and everyone around her. Ms. Odeh has positively influenced us as students, having proved that it is possible to rise above the ashes and achieve.

Ms. Odeh is also sixty-seven years old and on medication. We believe she is in no physical condition to endure a prison sentence.

We are asking you to consider all of the above when determining Rasmea Odeh's sentence. We plead for as much leniency as possible.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

National Students for Justice in Palestine Steering Committee

