



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Midwest Regional Office

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January 14, 2015

Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain,

I am writing to implore you to extend leniency in your March 12 sentencing of Rasmea Odeh,

In my capacity as Midwest Regional Director of the American Friends Service Committee – and previously as a congregational rabbi and activist – it has been my honor to work alongside Rasmea for almost ten years. I can attest to her upstanding moral character and her compassionate devotion to the cause of justice for Chicago's Arab and Muslim community. Rasmea is an award-winning leader of Chicago's immigrant community who has dedicated 50 years of her life to serving immigrants and refugees wherever she has lived.

I am particularly concerned about the impact a long sentence will have on Rasmea as a torture survivor. She has already been detained for a month in prison, including almost three weeks in solitary confinement. As a 67-year old woman, her health suffered under the cold, damp, and uncomfortable conditions in the St. Clair County Jail, as they surely would in any facility lacking medical services and accommodations to provide for senior citizens. Those of us who know and love Rasmea are deeply concerned about the effects further confinement will have on her emotional and physical health.

I understand that there is a possibility of her conviction being overturned on appeal. I do believe that keeping her out of prison would allow her to continue as a contributing and productive community leader, doing the work that is so critical to hundreds of immigrant and refugee women in Chicago's Arab and Muslim community. I strongly believe that a sentence without additional prison time for Rasmea will serve the cause of justice in this case.

Respectfully yours,

Rabbi Brant Rosen

Regional Director, Midwest
American Friends Service Committee

