



February 4, 2015

**COMMITTEE FOR
A JUST PEACE
IN ISRAEL
AND PALESTINE**

1044 Gunderson
Oak Park, IL 60304
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Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain,

On behalf of the Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine (CJPIP) in Oak Park, Illinois, I am writing to request leniency in the March 12th sentencing of Rasmea Odeh. Ms. Odeh is a compassionate leader and role model in human rights, who has dedicated her life to serving refugees who have endured harsh and brutal conditions in their home countries.

As a Chicago-area organization which promotes human rights in Israel and Palestine, CJPIP has long appreciated Ms. Odeh's remarkable work in Chicago with the Arab Women's Committee. Because of her commitment and indefatigable efforts, immigrant and refugee women who have fled war-torn countries in the Middle East can live in the U.S. in a community where they feel supported and can rebuild their lives. While there are others who do this essential work, those who know Rasmea recognize that her contributions are exceptional.

One of the reasons for her effectiveness is that Ms. Odeh has first-hand knowledge of these women's' experiences, both in their native countries and as immigrants. Additionally, her natural empathy has been enhanced through her personal suffering both as a past survivor of torture and most recently in her confinement in the St. Clair County Jail.

In fact, the conditions in the jail have compromised her physical and emotional health, and she needs every opportunity to be able to recover her strength.

We fervently hope that justice will prevail and that Ms. Odeh will be able to successfully appeal her conviction. We know that allowing her to remain in her community as her case proceeds through the courts would allow her to continue her invaluable work to empower hundreds of women in Chicago's Arab and Muslim community.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

Caren Levy-Van Slyke
Chair, Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine

