



February 2, 2014

Re: Rasmee Odeh

Dear Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain,

I am writing to request leniency from you in the March 10th sentencing of Rasmee Odeh, who I know as a dedicated community leader and respected ally of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois.

As Executive Director of United African Organization, I have had the opportunity to partner with Rasmee in organizing and advocating for voiceless and marginalized communities over the years. She always exuded a deep sense of optimism, boundless energy, and inspiring presence in the arduous task of serving vulnerable populations with dignity and compassion. A principled and tireless leader, she sacrificed countless hours to connect clients to needed services and strengthened partnership with multi-racial and multi-faith network of service providers and advocates for immigrants and refugees.

In November 2014, Rasmee was convicted of Unlawful Procurement of Naturalization. I am asking for compassion in her sentencing, as the only way to serve justice in this case. She was detained for a month immediately following the verdict, including almost 3 weeks in solitary confinement, which was extremely difficult for her. As a 67-year old woman, her health suffered under the cold, damp, and uncomfortable conditions in the St. Clair County Jail, as it surely would in any facility lacking medical services and accommodations to provide for senior citizens.

Since there is a possibility of her conviction being overturned on appeal, keeping her out of prison would allow our beloved sister and leader to continue as a contributing and productive person, doing the exemplary and inspiring work that is so critical to hundreds of refugee women in Chicago's diverse immigrant and refugee communities.

Rasmee is a strong pillar of hope and dignity for all of us as we seek to uphold our cherished American values of tolerance and inclusion.

Sincerely,

Alie Kabba, Executive Director

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