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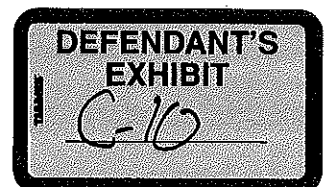
To the Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain:

I am writing on behalf of the Arab Jewish Partnership for Peace & Justice in the Middle East ("AJP") to respectfully request leniency when you sentence Rasmea Odeh on March 12, 2015.

I am an attorney who represents children in the Cook County Child Protection Court in Chicago. I am also a Jewish American and the daughter of a Holocaust survivor who has been working with other Chicago activists from a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds for a just peace in Israel and Palestine. I visited Israel and Palestine last year on a solidarity delegation with a group of Jews and Palestinians, mainly from the Chicago area, including my rabbi and fellow members of Jewish Voice for Peace.

I personally have known Rasmea for about 15 years. She is related by marriage to a close friend of mine and a fellow AJP coordinating committee member. Considering the multiple traumas that Rasmea has suffered, literally since the year of her birth, one could understand if she was a cold, hard and angry person. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rasmea is a warm, kind and empathetic person. She lives very modestly and devotes her time and energy to helping immigrant women in the Chicago Arab community face the challenges of adapting to a new country and culture. Before Rasmea created the Arab Women's Committee, there were no social service agencies that could address the needs of this population due to language and cultural barriers. Rasmea bridged that gap so that women could have access to services such as counseling and legal assistance in cases of divorce and domestic violence. Rasmea is the backbone of a community that loves her as much as she loves them.

As a young woman, Rasmea was tortured for 25 days into a confession to a crime for which she served 10 years in an Israeli prison. Since being released so many years ago, Rasmea has led an exemplary life and has made an immeasurable contribution to the Chicago community. She is now a 67 year-old senior citizen with health problems and a diagnosis of PTSD. She already served a month in the St. Clair County jail including 3 weeks in solitary confinement and even this relatively short incarceration took a toll on her health.



If Rasmea loses her appeal, she will likely be stripped of her citizenship and deported - resulting in an elderly woman having to start her life over and permanently separate from her family, friends and community. This is devastating enough without compounding it with a prison term.

And should her conviction be overturned on appeal, allowing her to return to her community in Chicago will allow her to continue her important work with immigrants and refugees families.

The members of AJP believe that Rasmea has suffered enough and we implore you to impose leniency when imposing your sentence.

Respectfully,

Lisa A. Kosowski, Coordinator, on behalf of the Arab Jewish Partnership for Peace & Justice in the Middle East Coordinating Committee

