

**The Arab American News
5706 Chase Rd,
Dearborn, MI 48126**

Feb. 8, 2015

Honorable Judge Gershwin Drain,

I am writing to request leniency from you in the March 12 sentencing of Rasmea Odeh, whom I came to know through the coverage of The Arab American News of the trial. I am Osama Siblani, the publisher of The Arab American News and a community activist.

Rasmea is a respected leader. Her advocacy for immigrant women's issues is an example of her relentless work for her community that views her as a role model.

Although the defendant lives in Chicago, her reputation in the Arab American community of Metro Detroit is that of altruistic activism and care for issues that we hold dearly.

This woman has suffered enough. She was tortured and raped, as documented by a United Nations report. Even the court has acknowledged her claims of torture as credible. But despite all the pain, she transformed her experience into a message of love in Chicago, in a community she adopted as her own.

Rasmea suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and being locked in a jail cell will only aggravate the physical and psychological symptoms of her condition. She does not deserve this pain. She is approaching 70, and her health matters to hundreds of people who love and revere her.

Rasmea might face deportation, which would mean the end of countless ties and relationships with her family, friends and proteges. This punishment alone would bring her a significant amount of suffering. To add jail time would accumulate pain that could be spared by a merciful judgement from the honorable court.

We know that Rasmea and her legal counsel plan to appeal her conviction. Keeping her out of jail would allow her to continue her valuable work for her community and prolong her positive impact on her new country.

Although she was convicted by the jury, Rasmea is no threat to her society; she is a blessing. She has empowered many immigrants who came from the Middle East to call this place home.

Respectfully yours,



**Osama Siblani
Publisher
The Arab American News**

