

October 23, 2013

The below-signed organizations are deeply disturbed by and stand opposed to the indictment yesterday of Rasmae Yousef Odeh, a Palestinian-American community activist who has dedicated 10 years to the Chicago Arab-American community, working with women on issues ranging from promoting literacy and political education to addressing domestic violence and anti-Arab and Muslim sentiment.

Rasmae's indictment for alleged immigration fraud comes at a time when advocates for Palestinian rights and immigration rights activists have been facing increasing pressure all over the country. Exactly three years ago, 23 anti-war and Palestinian rights activists were subpoenaed to testify before a Grand Jury and several of their homes were raided by the FBI. There have been no indictments against the 23 activists subpoenaed in 2010, presumably because of a lack of evidence. It is no coincidence that federal prosecutors are now targeting Rasmae, who is a pillar in the same community.

The 2010 raids, the Grand Jury subpoenas that accompanied them, and this indictment against a 65 year old woman who suffered for a decade in Israeli prisons before coming to the U.S. in 1995, are a clear signal that federal authorities, along with Israel and its supporters in the U.S., are continuing to search for ways to intimidate and silence those who are effective advocates for Arab American communities, and who speak out for Palestinian rights.

In the last year alone, [Palestine Solidarity Legal Support](#), in partnership with the Center for Constitutional Rights, and in collaboration with the National Lawyers Guild and other organizations, has documented over 75 cases of intimidation and legal bullying. These include perceived surveillance, FBI contacts, and discriminatory enforcement of laws against advocates for Palestinian rights. Rasmae's arrest and indictment must be viewed within this wider context of widespread attempts to intimidate people into silence on one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. Rasmae's indictment is also an illustration of increasingly draconian enforcement of immigration laws, which have left immigrant communities devastated at the hands of Obama's Department of Homeland Security.

Rasmae is an exemplary citizen who recently finished a Master's degree in Criminal Justice and has a law degree from Jordan. She has overcome amazing odds after being convicted by the Israeli military court system in 1969 for her alleged association with a leftist Palestinian nationalist group that the U.S. designated a terrorist organization. The military courts operate exclusively to subjugate occupied Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. They routinely bypass all but a modicum of due process, and justify holding individuals without charge or trial for months and years, often in abusive conditions and subject to torture. Rasmae's activism against the Israeli occupation in the 1960s resulted in her imprisonment in Israeli prisons for 10 years, and it is surely her community activism in the U.S. that has made her, and by extension, the community that relies on her, the target of this indictment.

We call for solidarity with Rasma as she undergoes a difficult legal battle. Please support Rasma at her November 1 appearance in federal court in Detroit, Michigan. We are also asking all supporters to call Barbara McQuade, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan in Detroit, at 313.226.9501 or 313.226.9100, on **Friday, October 25th**, from **8 AM to 4 PM CST**, to demand that she **Drop the Charges Now**. For further action items, [please see the Arab American Action Network alert.](#)

SIGNED:

- 1. Al-Awda New York, Palestine Right to Return Coalition**
- 2. American Friends Service Committee**
- 3. American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee**
- 4. American Muslims for Palestine**
- 5. Arab Jewish Partnership for Peace and Justice in the Middle East**
- 6. AROC: Arab Resource & Organizing Center**
- 7. Bay Area Committee to Stop Political Repression (BACSPR)**
- 8. Bay Area Women in Black**
- 9. Boston Coalition for Palestinian Rights**
- 10. Boycott Israeli Apartheid Campaign – Vancouver**
- 11. Brooklyn College Students for Justice in Palestine**
- 12. Canada Palestine Association**
- 13. Center for Constitutional Rights**
- 14. Chicago Movement for Palestinian Rights**
- 15. College and University Workers United**
- 16. Committee for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine**
- 17. Committee for Open Discussion of Zionism**
- 18. Council on American-Islamic Relations – Chicago**
- 19. CUNY Law Students for Justice in Palestine**
- 20. Friends of Deir Ibzi'a**
- 21. Grassroots Global Justice Alliance**
- 22. Hampshire College Students for Justice in Palestine**
- 23. INCITE! Women and Trans* People of Color Against Violence**
- 24. Independent Jewish Voices – Vancouver**
- 25. Interdenominational Advocates for Peace (IDAP)**
- 26. International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network**
- 27. International League of People's Struggles**
- 28. Jadaliyya**
- 29. Jewish Voice for Peace**
- 30. Jewish Voice for Peace – Bay Area**
- 31. Jewish Voice for Peace – Chicago**

- 32. Jewish Voice for Peace – Detroit**
- 33. Jewish Voice for Peace – Philadelphia**
- 34. Jews for Palestinian Right of Return**
- 35. JEWS SAY NO!**
- 36. Justice for Palestinians – San Jose, CA**
- 37. Labor for Palestine**
- 38. Legalease Collective, CKUT, Montreal**
- 39. Minnesota Break the Bonds Campaign**
- 40. Muslim Defense Project of the National Lawyers Guild – New York Chapter**
- 41. National Lawyers Guild – Chicago**
- 42. National Lawyers Guild Free Palestine Subcommittee**
- 43. National Students for Justice in Palestine**
- 44. New York City Labor Against the War**
- 45. NYC Queers Against Israeli Apartheid**
- 46. Palestine Aid Society**
- 47. Palestine Solidarity Group – Chicago**
- 48. Palestine Solidarity Legal Support**
- 49. PAWA: Palestinian American Women’s Association**
- 50. Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace (PCAP)**
- 51. Queers Against Israeli Apartheid – Toronto, Canada**
- 52. Red Sparks Union – Vancouver**
- 53. Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network**
- 54. San Francisco Women in Black**
- 55. Socialist Action**
- 56. Solidarity: a socialist, feminist, anti-racist organization**
- 57. Sunbula: Arab Feminists for Change**
- 58. The Dream Defenders**
- 59. Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East**
- 60. United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)**
- 61. US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel**
- 62. US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation**
- 63. US Palestinian Community Network**
- 64. WBAI Justice and Unity Campaign**
- 65. Women of Colour Collective at the McGill Faculty of Law**
- 66. Voice of Palestine**