In this profile of Rasmea Odeh, *JPS* examines the case of a Palestinian woman who has been incarcerated in both Israel and the United States. After a decade of confinement in Israel, Odeh was freed in a prisoner exchange in 1979. Following deportation from the occupied Palestinian territories, she became a noted social justice and women’s rights organizer, first in Lebanon and Jordan, and later in the U.S., where she built the now over 800-strong Arab Women’s Committee of Chicago. In April 2017, Odeh accepted a plea bargain that would lead to her deportation from the United States after a years-long legal battle to overturn a devastating conviction on charges of immigration fraud. Observers, legal experts, and supporters consider the case to “reek of political payback,” in the words of longtime Palestine solidarity activist, author, and academic Angela Davis. Odeh’s generosity of spirit, biting wit, and easy smile did not desert her throughout the years that she fought her case. To know Odeh is to be reminded that the work of organizing for social justice is about the collective rather than the individual, and that engagement, relationship building, and trust are the foundations of such work.

A strong woman is caring and tough, practical and spiritual, revolutionary and flexible. You are all of these. You are all powerful and you hold up half of the sky.

—Rasmea Odeh

If we say abolish the prison-industrial complex . . . we should also say abolish apartheid and . . . the occupation of Palestine.

—Angela Davis

In 2010, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had raided the offices and homes of twenty-three pro-Palestine activists in Chicago and the Twin Cities (St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota), confiscating their personal property. Although the subsequent investigation led to no indictments or charges, the Midwest 23, as they came to be called, were suspected of violating laws barring material support to foreign terrorist organizations. It was in the context
of this repressive sweep that the U.S. government requested files from Israel on Rasmea Odeh, the deputy director of the Chicago-based Arab American Action Network (AAAN). The lead prosecutor in the case, Assistant U.S. Attorney Barry Jonas, had also prosecuted the case of the Holy Land Five—employees of the once-largest Islamic charity organization in the United States, convicted in 2008 of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization and conspiracy, among other charges. The Midwest 23, as well as third-party observers, contend that the U.S. government violated their First Amendment rights in order to name, locate, and map the increasingly vocal and visible network of Palestine solidarity activism in the country. Some believe that Odeh was targeted as a “consolation prize” for FBI investigators following the bureau’s inability to indict the Midwest 23, including Hatem Abudayyeh, her colleague and AAAN’s executive director. Odeh’s arrest took place in the context of mounting repression against pro-Palestine activism in the United States.

At 7:00 A.M. on 22 October 2013, U.S. Department of Homeland Security agents arrested Odeh at her home in Chicago charging her with unlawful procurement of naturalization. In the indictment issued a few days earlier, on 17 October, federal authorities claimed that nine-and-a-half years earlier Odeh had knowingly failed to disclose on her U.S. citizenship application that an Israeli military court had convicted her of a crime some thirty years before. Odeh had been arrested (along with her father and two sisters) in 1969, during an Israeli military sweep that affected over five hundred other Palestinians in the then newly occupied West Bank. The Odeh family’s very presence there had resulted from the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948, when the barely one-year-old Odeh was expelled by Zionist forces from her native Lyfta, along with the rest of the locality’s inhabitants.

In 1967, the year that Israel occupied the remaining Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (as well as the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula), Odeh had gone to Beirut to attend medical school. After her summer break at home, she tried to return to Lebanon to continue her studies, but the military occupation authorities barred her from leaving. The experience inspired her to abandon medical school and study law instead, so that she could advocate for her fellow dispossessed Palestinians. By the time of her 1969 military arrest, she had become a community organizer and political activist, providing displaced people with food aid, shelter, and social services.

In military custody, Odeh was physically and sexually tortured by Israeli interrogators. During her forty-five-day detention at the so-called Russian Compound (also known as the Moskobiyya) in Jerusalem, she underwent twenty-five days of nonstop night-and-day interrogation, during which she was beaten, raped, and witnessed the torture of other prisoners, including the administration of electric shocks to the genitalia. Odeh eventually agreed to confess to planting a bomb in a Jerusalem supermarket in 1969 that killed two people, a crime that she persistently denies having committed, and Israeli interrogators raped her even after they had secured her confession.

Sentenced to two life terms for a conviction that was acquired following torture, Odeh was incarcerated in Ramla Prison for ten years, from 18 April 1969 to 14 March 1979, except for two brief periods when she was (illegally) transferred to a prison in Gaza as punishment for organizing prisoner strikes. In 1979, her sentence was truncated when she and seventy-five other Palestinian prisoners were released in an Israeli-Palestinian prisoner exchange. Upon release in
Geneva, Odeh testified before a special UN committee about the sexual torture to which Israeli interrogators had subjected her and to the brutal attacks she had witnessed on other prisoners. Her graphic testimony and that of her father are available online.7

Banished from Palestine, Odeh lived between Lebanon and Jordan and eventually moved to Detroit, Michigan, in 1994 to care for her ailing father. Following his death, she decided to make Chicago her new home. She had earlier visited the city and noted the pervasive difficulties faced by newly arrived immigrant women that ranged from overt racism, isolation, and gender violence to a critical lack of social support and restricted access to social services. To ease the women’s isolation and relieve their sense of fearfulness at being in a new country, Odeh suggested that they gather socially with their neighbors. Using her skills as a grassroots organizer, she deployed the personalized, relationship-based strategy she had developed in earlier settings, and cold-called the numbers associated with Arabic names in the telephone book in order to build what would eventually grow into the Arab Women’s Committee (AWC).8

Members and observers describe the AWC as a collective healing space for Chicago’s immigrant and refugee Arab women, a place where they can offer and receive mutual support.9 Nadine Naber, associate professor in the Gender and Women’s Studies and Global Asian Studies programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago, describes the AWC as one of Chicago’s “most grassroots, large-scale, and successful organizations that provide[s] social services as well as community-building efforts for empowering and deeply transform[ing] the lives of working-class disenfranchised Arab immigrant women from every country the U.S. has been invading.”10 Odeh has not only found this work deeply fulfilling, but has credited the struggle for justice with these women as constituting some of the best years of her life and as helping her to overcome much of her own personal pain.11

United States vs. Rasmea Odeh

In October 2013, Odeh was indicted and charged with one count of unlawful procurement of naturalization—in other words, immigration fraud—carrying a possible maximum sentence of ten years in prison and a $250,000 fine. The charge was based on Odeh’s “no” response to a question about past convictions on her immigration and citizenship applications. Prosecutors offered Odeh a plea deal: in return for an admission of guilt and receiving no jail time or fines, she would be stripped of her U.S. citizenship and would undertake a so-called voluntary departure from the United States—that is, deportation. Confident in her innocence, Odeh rejected the offer, pled not guilty to the crime of immigration fraud, and went to trial. “I wanted to come here and tell my story,” she would say to the judge at her sentencing hearing almost two years later; “I came here to find justice.”12 For her defense, Odeh retained Michael Deutsch of the People’s Law Office in Chicago, a prominent civil rights attorney with a history of defending activists, including Fred Hampton (the Black Panther leader who was assassinated by local law enforcement and the FBI in Chicago in 1969) and Muhammad Salah (a Palestinian-American who filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government for limiting his freedom over seventeen years and identifying him as a “specially designated terrorist.”)13
At her pretrial hearing, the defense presented several motions to ensure that Odeh received a fair trial. One requested that presiding judge Paul Borman recuse himself from the case because of his financial and moral support for Israel and Israeli organizations. The motion argued that “one who has been a life-long supporter and promoter of Israel and has deep ties to the State of Israel spanning over fifty years, who no doubt believes that Israel is a great democracy and protector of human rights, cannot be ‘reasonably’ said to be impartial when these claims of torture and illegality are raised by a Palestinian defendant.” The defense also moved to bar any reference to Odeh’s 1969 conviction in Israel because it had been handed down by a court that lacked due process. The third motion presented evidence of the torture Odeh had endured at the hands of her jailers throughout her ten-year incarceration by the Israeli authorities.

The issue of psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) would become a focal point of the defense’s legal argument, and a point of contention in court. Odeh testified that she had taken the question on the immigration forms to refer to her time in the United States rather than abroad. To support her claim, clinical psychologist Mary Fabri, a specialist on torture with a long history of working with survivors, submitted an affidavit to the court stating that chronic PTSD caused Odeh “to interpret the naturalization questions as a way to avoid thought of her past trauma.” Therefore, the defense argued, Odeh’s “no” answer to the question of past convictions was a natural consequence of the lasting trauma caused by having been raped and physically tortured. Tragically, to prove her innocence, the survivor of torture would need to speak about it. The information would be key to Odeh receiving a fair trial. Instead, the court silenced her.

Although he initially took issue with the defense’s argument that his support for Zionism and the Israeli state presented a conflict of interest, Judge Borman recused himself upon learning of his family’s past investments in the company that owned the SuperSol supermarket where the 1969 bombing had taken place. At her 2 September status hearing (where the defense and prosecution discuss the case before going to trial), Odeh appeared before a new judge, Gershwin Drain, as supporters from across the country called in to demand that the immigration fraud charges against her be dropped. Defense attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the case: Odeh, they argued, was already in the government’s sights during the 2010 sweep of the Midwest 23, and they described the indictment against her as “the product of an illegal investigation into the First Amendment activities of the Arab-American Action Network (AAAN) and intended to suppress the work of the defendant in support of the Arab community of Chicago.” The defense confirmed in their motion to dismiss that “U.S. Attorney, Brandon Fox . . . initiated a request through the Office of International Affairs Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice from the State of Israel for records of the defendant.” This sharing of information was possible through a mutual legal assistance treaty signed between Israel and the United States in 1998, and hundreds of documents were submitted as evidence into the trial. The defense presented three other motions at the pretrial hearing: one arguing for the exclusion of hundreds of Israeli documents from Israeli military occupation courts; another to include interviews with U.S. citizens who had also been arrested by the Israeli military in the 1969 sweep of the West Bank; and a third to include expert testimony regarding Odeh’s torture and prison-related PTSD.
At the pretrial hearing on 2 October, the judge dismissed the defense’s motion to drop charges. A few days later, prosecutors filed an extraordinary motion for an anonymous jury (a move that hinders the defense from screening jurors by barring their access to identifying information) and another motion to sequester jurors, a measure that had the “potential to paint the defendant as a dangerous person from whom jurors need protection and thereby undermine the defendant’s right to a presumption of innocence.” The text of the motion also attempted to criminalize supporters who had accompanied Odeh to the hearings. The judge denied the prosecution’s request for an anonymous jury, but granted the request for partial sequestration, allowing jurors to be led into the court from an off-site location so that they could not see—and be prejudiced by the sight of—the crowds who had come to stand with the defendant. Such conditions caused the jury apprehension and encouraged them to believe that the defendant was somehow dangerous.

Defense Attorney Deutsch summarized the defense strategy as, “to keep out the [Israeli] documents, show the jury the illegality of the military tribunal, then put out an expert who examined her and evaluated her and said she had PTSD.” The judge would have none of it: he allowed the Israeli military court documents, blocked the torture as well as the PTSD defense, and kept out the torture expert. The jurors were therefore to be allowed to see Odeh’s signed confession admitting to the 1969 bombings without ever learning about the weeks of torture that had preceded it. “By precluding from the trial any mention of torture, the court has gutted the heart of Odeh’s defense and makes a fair trial impossible,” her lawyer noted. It was then that the defense resorted to an alternative strategy for conveying Odeh’s ordeal to the jury.

**Trial and Sentencing**

Odeh’s trial began on 4 November 2014. In his opening statement, her attorney addressed the jury by saying that it would have been ideal if he had been able to sit in their living room to tell them this story. “Rasmea Odeh,” Deutsch told the jurors, “embodies the history of the Palestinian people: a story of great suffering and great resilience.” Laying out the violent colonial context of the occupied Palestinian territories in which Odeh lived, he conveyed the torture without specifically mentioning it, asking the jury to, “use [their] imagination about what ‘interrogation for weeks’ means.” Odeh took the witness stand on the third day of the trial after being reminded by the judge that neither she nor her defense team was to make any mention of torture. When Odeh responded, saying, “It’s my life! I have a right to talk about the things that happened to me,” the judge was adamant. He warned that he would hold her in contempt of court if she deviated from his instructions.

During her testimony, the prosecution objected three times—when Odeh said that she had spent forty-five days in an interrogation center; when she stated that the Israeli court had convicted her falsely; and when in response to her lawyer’s question about her attempted escape she responded, “Of course, any political prisoner [would] try to escape!” Judge Drain sustained all of the prosecutors’ objections and struck the reference to her as a political prisoner from the record. On the fourth and last day of the trial, the prosecution cross-examined Odeh in an attempt to demonstrate that she had intentionally lied on her naturalization forms rather than mistakenly understood the question to refer to prior convictions in the United States.
“You knew that was a false statement when you submitted your application?” he asked.
“No, why would I lie?” Odeh responded.
“Why would you lie? You had to lie because you knew if the U.S. Embassy had found out you were in Lebanon, they would find out you had been in Israel before and would then have found out that you had been convicted of two bombings that resulted in the death of two innocent civilians.”
“No, I was tortured,” Odeh exclaimed.30

This would be the first time that the jury heard of Odeh’s torture. After less than two hours of deliberation, on Monday, 10 November 2014, the jury entered a guilty verdict and Odeh was arrested and sent to county jail where she was to remain for four months, until her sentencing hearing the following March. Judge Drain accepted the prosecutors’ request to revoke her bond on the grounds that Odeh was a flight risk, as well as dishonest, disrespectful of the court, and with no sufficient ties to Chicago’s community. In an unprecedented move, Drain told the courtroom, “I don’t normally comment on verdicts, but in this case I will: I think it’s a fair and reasonable one based on the evidence that came in.”31 He then went on to deride Odeh’s ordeal in Israel and accused the defense of wanting to “re-litigate” the bombing case by invoking that “she was beaten, raped, or whatever.”32 On her way to county jail in handcuffs, Odeh told her supporters, “There is justice in this world. We will find it. . . . We will fight for justice.”33 Her attorneys filed a motion to release her on bond three days later and her defense committee called on supporters throughout the country to mobilize for her release.

A collective outcry erupted on 5 December when her attorneys discovered that Odeh had been placed in solitary confinement for almost three weeks, another repressive measure that had originally been imposed for six days but was renewed for three days at a time.34 (It is widely believed that she was placed in solitary because she had begun organizing among women prisoners in the two weeks that she spent among the general prison population.) And then, on 8 December, Judge Drain issued a motion ruling that she was free to leave jail on a $50,000 bond donated by one of her supporters. In the motion, the presiding judge wrote, “Defendant’s dedication to her community work and the people that such work assists, as well as the presence of relatives in Chicago, demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that she is not as significant a flight risk as originally believed.”35 Prosecutor Jonathan Tukel filed a motion challenging the bond, which he withdrew after an hour-long deposition. On 11 December 2014, Odeh was released on bail.

Prior to her sentencing hearing, set for 12 March 2015, the defense filed two new motions, both of which were declined: one arguing that the court’s ruling was in error and calling for a new trial, and the other to dismiss the jury’s decision. As they appealed her conviction, the defense also asked the judge to exercise leniency in his sentencing, taking into account Odeh’s age, poor health, chronic PTSD, and “exemplary history in the United States.” At the sentencing hearing itself, Odeh appealed directly to Judge Drain, saying: “Every time I try to do something good in my life, then something from outside destroys what we have and I am left with nothing.”36 The judge sentenced her to eighteen months in prison as well as deportation, but she was free to go home on bond.

On 9 June, Deutsch filed an appeal with the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, Ohio, to reverse the conviction (and sentencing). Among others, he cited the judge’s wrongful
decision to stop Odeh from giving full testimony and to allow Israeli military court documents into
the trial.\textsuperscript{37} Additionally, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed an amicus brief in
support of the appeal on behalf of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims,
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel,
REDRESS (a human-rights organization that helps torture survivors obtain justice and reparation),
and the World Organisation Against Torture.\textsuperscript{38} Defense presented their oral argument at the
appellate court on 14 October and, on 25 February 2016, the court remanded the case, sending it
back to Judge Drain, and ruling it a legal error on his part to preclude the expert testimony on
Odeh’s chronic trauma.

In June 2016, a new trial date was set for early 2017, to be preceded on 29 November by a
Daubert hearing requested by the prosecution to challenge the validity and admissibility of Fabri’s
expert testimony. The government also asked for a forensic psychologist to examine Odeh. In an
attempt to protect Odeh from additional harm, the defense requested that the forensic expert’s
identity be disclosed along with information on the nature of tests that might be administered;
they also requested that the examination be held at a “neutral” site and that Odeh be granted the
right to have a companion during the examination.\textsuperscript{39} Dr. Fabri filed a supporting motion
indicating that the examination risked retriggering Odeh’s PTSD. The examination went ahead,
and psychologist Ron Nieberding, the expert witness for the prosecution who had no history of
working with trauma/torture survivors, examined Odeh for \textit{seventeen hours}. He confirmed the
chronic PTSD but contested Dr. Fabri’s conclusion that Odeh’s trauma affected her memory at
the time of the application. The day before Odeh was scheduled to appear at the Daubert hearing,
the judge canceled it, and a week later he set a new trial date for 10 January 2017.

Only four weeks before the new trial was set to begin, U.S. Attorney Barbara McQuade
obtained a superseding indictment that listed two further charges against Odeh: engaging in
“terrorist activity,” and failing to report alleged association with the Popular Front for the
Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a U.S.-designated terrorist organization. The final trial date
was set for 30 May. On 31 January, the defense filed another motion to dismiss the charges,
arguing that the new indictments were brought well past the statute of limitations on immigration
cases and were so different from the original indictments that they could not be accepted by the
court.\textsuperscript{40}

In preparation for a 25 April pretrial hearing in Detroit in which the judge would consider
whether or not to allow the new indictments, the defense filed two new motions: one to
suppress evidence obtained through torture and the other for discovery of all evidence relating
to Odeh’s arrest and torture, including the identities of the torturer(s), and Israel’s “use of
force” guidelines from 1969.\textsuperscript{41} Supporters were confident that if the judge dismissed the new
indictments, Odeh would likely win the case at her new trial. However, by then, the deck was
stacked against her: first, there was no guarantee that the court would dismiss the new
indictments; and second, the right-wing Trump administration had come into office and
appointed the conservative, virulently anti-immigrant Jeff Sessions as attorney general. Like
the majority of criminal cases in the U.S. judicial system, this one was a dangerous gamble,
and on 23 March 2017, Odeh announced that she would accept a plea deal rather than go to
trial a second time.
Carceral States

Prior to her foundational work with women in Chicago, and long before the U.S. government began prosecuting her, Odeh had already become an iconic figure to Palestinians for her women’s activism and because of her status as a freed political prisoner. While all Palestinians in the oPt suffer from the occupation, for prisoners this is compounded by the fact that they are isolated, denied due process, and persistently subjected to violence, with Israel’s military court system simply acting as the judicial arm of the occupation. As sociologist and author Lisa Hajjar notes, “Law enforcement in the occupied territories is not disinterested. . . . It is provided primarily by soldiers, most of whom, by all accounts, are deeply hostile to and suspicious of Palestinians.”

According to its own statistics, the Israeli military court system convicts 99.74 percent of defendants. Put differently, every Palestinian who comes through the system will be convicted of the crime with which they are charged. This is the court system that convicted Odeh in 1970.

Of her time in U.S. prison, Odeh has said that it forced her to relive her incarceration experience in Israel, which she describes as follows:

While in custody, they tried to control every aspect of my life, my physical body, my mind, and it reached a point where I would not sleep, because I did not want to put myself in a position where I was weak and could be controlled. The whole system of incarceration is designed to destroy people’s humanity and make them feel hopeless and in despair. I saw with my own eyes how the other prisoner women were driven to extremes, like screaming and shouting, just to feel like they were still human and still alive. Humans are social; to be in isolation not only cuts you off from other people, it also cuts you off from yourself. It destroys you emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually, and makes you feel as if you are no longer whole. This is the deadliest thing.

She adds that the experience gave her the opportunity to better understand the racism that women of color face in the United States, especially those who end up in the carceral system because of “the refusal of our government to understand the socio-economic and psychological conditions that are the cause of the vast majority of alleged crimes in this country.”

Making up 5 percent of the world’s population and about 25 percent of the world’s imprisoned population, the United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, an alarming phenomenon identified by the American Civil Liberties Union as a “prison crisis.” As with most public arenas in the United States, this one, too, is not without a long and continuing history of race- and class-based discrimination. Explanations for the racialized crisis of mass incarceration in the United States are numerous: from heavy policing of poor communities and communities of color to harsh sentencing laws emanating from “tough-on-crime” administrations (Republican and Democrat), as well as disproportionate power in the hands of prosecutors and district attorneys, to name just a few. In her best-selling book, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander proposes a compelling thesis about the problem: “In the era of colorblindness,” she writes, “it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don’t. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind.”
In the case of a Palestinian woman with a history of political activism, prosecutors criminalized Odeh by invoking terrorism. “A light sentence in this case,” claimed prosecutors, “would be a signal to anyone who has fought overseas for ISIS or a similar organization that there is not much risk in coming to the United States, hiding one’s past, and seeking citizenship.” They failed to see the irony of drawing links between the community-organizing work of a woman that empowers her refugee and immigrant sisters who are the very victims of the horrors that the so-called Islamic State and its ilk inflict. The tactic was just one that prosecutors used to influence the jury’s opinions of the defendant. As her defense pointed out, while Odeh, the Palestinian, was barred from testifying about the violent context of military occupation in which she was arrested and convicted, as well as the lasting effects of such violence on her psyche, prosecutors mentioned the bombing of the Israeli supermarket over fifty times. In Deutsch’s words, “the Government . . . insists that the defendant be branded a terrorist, and sentenced accordingly, based on a conviction for bombings obtained in an illegitimate military trial, conducted by war criminals, forty-five years ago.”

On the steps of the Detroit courthouse following the 25 April plea hearing, Frank Chapman, a field organizer for the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, reminded Odeh’s assembled supporters that 95 percent of criminal cases in the United States do not go to trial (according to the government’s own Bureau of Justice Statistics). Prosecutors offer plea bargains that convince defendants to waive their right to trial before a jury of their peers: rather than incur the costs involved in a trial and possible maximum sentencing, defendants plead guilty, even when innocent, in order to get a reduced sentence. The exponential rise in plea bargaining is attributable to many factors, among them the threat of harsher charges, tough sentencing laws including mandatory sentencing—set minimum sentences for certain crimes that cannot be altered by a judge under any circumstance—and bottlenecks in the court system. Some legal scholars liken the practice to extortion: plea bargaining bestows enormous power on prosecutors, sometimes greater even than that of judges, and it invalidates the theoretical cornerstone of the U.S. justice system that one is innocent until proven guilty. In the words of William Young, a former federal judge: “The focus of our entire criminal justice system has shifted away from trials and juries and adjudication to a massive system of sentence bargaining that is heavily rigged against the accused.”

The case United States vs. Rasmea Odeh also exemplifies the judicial cooperation between the U.S. and Israeli governments and the parallels between their systems. By deporting Odeh, the United States is upholding Israeli apartheid, this time in its own courts.

Prosecutors insisted that Odeh’s trial was not political—that it was merely about immigration. But immigration itself is political: it involves crossing constructed political boundaries and settling in a new political territory. In the case of a Palestinian refugee who has been displaced multiple times by an apartheid state that enjoys complete impunity for its persistent crimes; a woman who works to empower and protect other immigrant and refugee women; and a former political prisoner who has testified to her torture, the trial was all the more political. As her defense team has stated succinctly, Odeh’s case is “part of a larger campaign against Palestinian leaders, institutions, and community members; as well as an example of government repression waged against oppressed nationalities, anti-war, social justice, and international solidarity activists.”
Defeated but unbowed, Odeh enjoined a roomful of supporters at the 2017 Jewish Voice for Peace National Member Meeting to continue their activism “despite the attacks.”

At the 25 April 2017 plea hearing, Judge Drain repeatedly asked Odeh to state that she freely and willingly admitted to her guilt. Refusing to utter the words, she retorted, “I signed this!” as she pointed to her plea agreement. On the steps of the courthouse afterwards, Odeh told her supporters, “Today in court, they gave me no other choice.” A conviction is a formal declaration of guilt and, for the second time in her life, Odeh was convicted of a crime that she insists she did not commit.

About the Author
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ENDNOTES
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7 UNGA, A/34/631 51.
10 “Labor Day Focus on Immigrant Women.”
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46 Odeh, “Speech to the Opening Plenary.”


57 “All In!,” YouTube video, 1:33:09, from a speech to the Jewish Voice for Peace National Member Meeting on 2 April 2017, posted by Jewish Voice for Peace, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGhYIn1x1Ng.