

Samaher Esmail faces Israeli military trial over pro-Palestinian posts

written by Gregory E. Williams
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Undated family photo of Samaher Esmail.

The Zionist state plans to try a U.S. citizen and New Orleans-area resident – Samaher Esmail – in a military court over social media posts. They’re not even alleging that she did anything besides post pro-Palestinian pictures.

So much for “Israel” being a “democracy in the Middle East” (West Asia). For Palestinians, there is no freedom of speech, movement, or any other kind in their occupied homeland. On the other hand, “Israeli” soldiers and settler mobs are free to post their acts of violence all over the internet and face no repercussions.

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) dragged 46-year-old Esmail out of her family home in Silwad on the occupied West Bank on the night of Feb. 5. She is a cancer patient. Her family was able to capture the brutal kidnapping on video, which sparked outrage across the internet.

Neither Genocide Joe Biden nor Louisiana’s racist governor, Jeff Landry, have said a word about Esmail’s treatment throughout the whole period she’s been in administrative detention. The local governments in Louisiana have been mute as well.

Four days passed before she was given access to a lawyer. It took 14 days for someone from the U.S. consulate to check on her. Meanwhile, during the first six days in prison, Esmail was denied access to her medications and lost consciousness at one point.

The Zionist regime has let her out on bail but will not allow her return to the U.S. Her next trial date is March 31. The Zionists have no intention of giving her a fair trial. She’s facing bogus charges, and this is a sham court. The military courts constitute a separate legal system designed for abusing Palestinians in the West Bank and have a 99% conviction rate. “Israeli” citizens are not tried in these courts.



Thousands of pro-Palestine marchers gathered in New Orleans' Congo Square on Feb. 18. SLL photo

But the movement in the greater New Orleans area has been fighting for her. During the Gulf Coast March for Palestine on Feb. 18, several thousand people from across the Gulf South and beyond chanted “Free Samaher Esmail” in the streets, as well as “Justice for Tawfik Abdeljabbar.” Abdeljabbar was a 17-year-old Palestinian New Orleans area native who was killed by an occupation officer when he visited his homeland of Palestine on Jan. 19.

This action — the Gulf Coast March for Palestine — began with a rally in Armstrong Park, on the outskirts of the French Quarter. The park is the site of the historic

Congo Square.

Many consider Congo Square a sacred site, particularly those who draw from the African diaspora religions. It was a unique site in North America through various periods of the slave economy (under the Spanish, French, and then U.S. control). Because of peculiarities in Louisiana law, enslaved and free Africans here had some legal right to gather, and Congo Square became a place where masses of enslaved, free African, and Indigenous peoples were able to meet, celebrate, sell wares, and more.

This history is one reason Congo Square was chosen as the march's launching point. Many speakers invoked this history to highlight the continuities across time and among peoples regarding the liberation struggle. No one is free until we're all free.

The march was led by Masjid Omar mosque and some 20 other organizations. This broad coalition has continued to carry out actions since Feb. 18. We have to keep up the pressure.

Justice for Tawfik! Free Samaher Esmail!

The campaign to free Samaher Esmail has requested that supporters contact the U.S. State Department and Louisiana Congressperson Troy Carter. Suggested wording and contact information are given below.

U.S. State Department, Office of Overseas Citizens Services: (888) 407-4747

Script:

Hi, my name is ____ and I live in _____. I am calling regarding LA-District 2 constituent and U.S. citizen Samaher Esmail, who Israeli Defense Forces abducted in the occupied West Bank of Palestine on Feb. 5, 2024, and wrongfully imprisoned and charged. She is a cancer patient and has been denied essential medication. I am

calling for the U.S. State Department to act immediately ahead of Esmail's March 31 trial and to designate Esmail as wrongfully charged by Israel and to demand Israel drop all charges against Esmail and allow her to come home.

Congressman Troy Carter (LA-District 2): (202) 225-6636

Script:

Hi, my name is ___ and my zip code is ___. I am calling regarding LA-District 2 constituent and U.S. citizen Samaher Esmail, who Israeli Defense Forces abducted in the occupied West Bank of Palestine on Feb. 5, 2024, and wrongfully imprisoned and charged. She is a cancer patient and has been denied essential medication. I am calling for Congressman Carter to ensure that the U.S. State Department designate Esmail as wrongfully charged by Israel and to demand Israel drop all charges against Esmail and allow her to come home.

