

LA Jews for Peace calls on Israel to Reverse Daren Tatour's conviction for reading a poem

Send comments to info@LAJewsforPeace.org; August 4, 2018

LA Jews for Peace calls on Israel to reverse Daren Tatour's conviction for publicly reading one of her poems.

Tatour was convicted April 26, 2018 by a Nazareth court for an October 2015 social media post of a video of her reading her poem titled "Resist, My People, Resist Them."¹ In the poem she urged Palestinians to never "agree to a peace solution." The video received fewer than 300 views.

Tatour was convicted of inciting violence and supporting a "terror organization." Tatour says there was no call for violence in her poem, rather that it calls for a non-violent struggle, but Israeli authorities interpreted it to be violent.²

Tatour was sentenced to five months in prison after having already served nearly three years under house arrest that banned her use of cellphones and the internet. Her conviction and sentence are under appeal.

Tatour has broad support ranging from the Israeli newspaper Ha'Aretz³ and Israeli literary figures⁴ A Ha'Aretz editorial said "In convicting Tatour, the court has lent a hand to silencing and criminalizing poetry. This is a badge of shame for Israeli democracy, whose judges are made to interpret poems," and pointed out that Arabs in Israel are used to hearing cries of "death to the Arabs," and a chance perusal of social media or the Knesset corridors is enough to see and hear the incitement – but no one is taken to court for that.

Tatour is also supported internationally by to American literary figures and the International Writers group PEN. PEN said "Tatour has been convicted for doing what writers do every day - we use our words to peacefully challenge injustice."

If Tatour's conviction is enforced while rabbis and Jewish political leaders and settlers make equivalent or worse statements and are not even indicted, it demonstrates that Israel has different laws for Jews and others, and this case is just another Palestinian writer persecuted by Israel for her speech. That is apartheid.

¹ "Only Arabs go to jail": Israel convicts Palestinian over poem" May 3, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/arabs-jaii-israel-convicts-palestinian-poem-180503161402330.html>

² "Daren Tatour sentenced to five months in prison over poem" July 31, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/daren-tatour-sentenced-months-prison-poem-180731084215893.html>

³ Ha'aretz editorial, "The Terror of Poetry" May 6, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/the-terror-of-poetry-1.6055331>

⁴ "Sad Day for Democracy": Israeli Writers Outraged at Conviction of Palestinian Poet Daren Tatour" May 6, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-writers-outraged-at-conviction-of-palestinian-poet-tatour-1.6055124>