

Testimony in Opposition to H>B> 476
Ohio House of Representatives
Committee on Government Accountability and Oversight

May 10, 2016

Chairman Brown, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Clyde and Members of the Committee.

Good Afternoon.

My name is Anna Ruiz, I am a mother and grandmother. I am a retired Realtor (I also worked as a caregiver after the housing market crashed) whose card read: "Welcome Home". The American Dream is home ownership, a little space that is mine—be it ever so humble or a castle worth millions. Imagine losing yours, Imagine Ohio being selected to create the JEWISH State of Israel. How willing would you be to vacate your home, land and business to make way? With or without gunpoint and massacre of your family, friends and neighbors?

I am also a refugee; my Hungarian parents emigrated from post-war Germany to the States. I experienced the difficulties of being a refugee child often taunted by other children: COMMIE GO HOME. Of course, my parents with their Hungarian accents were no commies. But that was the prevailing paradigm in the 50's thanks to the censorship tactics of McCarthyism which is resurfacing today in so many many ways. Censorship is censorship. Anti-BDS is censorship.

As a side note, no one in the world aided Hungary in 1956 during their revolution when Hungarians stood up to Russian tanks and weapons with rocks, sticks and stones, and Molotov cocktails. Thousands of people died and many of my (bit older) generation disappeared forever.

(My ex-husband is from Peru. I also experienced discrimination based on my married last name). I digress.

After an experience of spiritual awakening in 2005, an experience of being human that expanded into the cosmos itself, poetry was reborn and my life-altering meeting with Don Bryant (who gave testimony yesterday). He invited me to Dennis Kucinich's Middle East Peace Forum during a poetry reading at a Cleveland venue. I have always been involved in humanitarian efforts, but my sentiment at that time was (thanks to our one-sided media) *Why can't they (the Palestinians) just stop sending missiles and.....*

Fast forward nearly 10 years, I now know, to my frustration, anger and ceaseless commitment to Palestine via Cleveland Peace Action/Middle East Committee. And my associations with activists all over the world. Including women & children's rights.

I REALIZE BDS IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. EQUATING ANTI-BDS LEGISLATION WITH ANTI-SEMITISM IS EGREGIOUSLY MISLEADING IN SO MANY WAYS. IN EVERY WAY.

CRITICISM OF CRITICISM OF A COUNTRY IS CENSORSHIP AND THE BEGINNING AND END OF FASCISM. WE KNOW WHERE THAT LEADS, DON'T WE????

Period.

In that endeavor I would like to read 2 few poems with 2 few statements in between them.

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***THE OCCUPYING POWER SHALL NOT DEPORT OR TRANSFER PARTS OF ITS OWN CIVILIAN POPULATION INTO THE TERRITORY IT OCCUPIES. ~~ Article 49 of the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention***

Mahmoud Darwish is probably the most recognized Palestinian poet. In the 1960's Darwish was imprisoned for reciting poetry and travelling between villages without a permit. Considered a "resistance poet," he was placed under house arrest when his poem "**IDENTITY CARD**" was turned into a protest song. I won't read that one but I'll read his poem "**IN JERUSALEM**".

In Jerusalem ~ Poem by Mahmoud Darwish

In Jerusalem, and I mean within the ancient walls,  
I walk from one epoch to another without a memory  
to guide me. The prophets over there are sharing  
the history of the holy ... ascending to heaven  
and returning less discouraged and melancholy because love  
and peace are holy and are coming to town.  
I was walking down a slope and thinking to myself: How  
do the narrators disagree over what light said about a stone?  
Is it from a dimly lit stone that wars flare up?  
I walk in my sleep. I stare in my sleep. I see  
no one behind me. I see no one ahead of me,  
All this light is for me. I walk. I become lighter. I fly  
then I become another. Transfigured words  
sprout like grass from Isaiah's messenger  
mouth: "If you don't believe you won't be safe."  
I walk as if I were another. And my wound a white  
biblical rose. And my hands like two doves  
on the cross hovering and carrying the earth  
I don't walk, I fly, I become another,  
transfigured. No place and no time. So who am I?  
I am no. 1 in ascension's presence. But I  
think to myself: Alone, the prophet Muhammad  
spoke classical Arabic. "And then what?"  
Then what? A woman soldier shouted:  
Is that you again? Didn't I kill you?  
I said: You killed me ... and I forgot, like you, to die.

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DEFENSE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL PALESTINE gathered testimonies of 429 Palestinian child detainees in the Occupied West Bank from 2012-2015

75% endured physical violence after arrest

60% were transferred to Israeli prisons in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention

88% were arrested without notifying parents of reason for the arrest or detention location

97% had no parent present during interrogation or access to legal counsel

500-700 children are detained by Israeli forces each year.

Their crime—suspected of throwing stones. Netanyahu in September of last year approved “harsher punishment for Palestinian stone throwers”.

I ask you what could be more harsher punishment?

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Now, a poem of mine from 2006 though I was a bit naive then.

### **I Don't Know How To Give You Peace**

I don't know how to give you peace  
how to heal your wounds, make your  
scars disappear.

I don't know how to ride the wild wind today,  
form the sun from this blood-wet clay I hold  
in my hands.

O Israel!  
O Palestine!

You were radiant then, in your olive groves--  
your loaves of bread broken in friendship,  
your fish bountiful, shared.

I don't know how to carry a cross  
across the ocean,

your exodus of narrow streets, black veils of  
mourning,  
our tears filled with Gethsemane.

I don't know how to scrape fear from the bottom  
of my begging bowl,  
I don't know how to summon the dove of peace.

Find that far land time has forgotten needing no amends.

Shalom. Salaam. Peace.

PEACE begins with each and every human being. PEACE can not be separated from JUSTICE, however.

BDS is fair, just and non-violent.

Thank you for listening—the exact opposite of censorship.

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