

Hi Representatives,

My name is Sophia, and I regret that I could not be present today. At this moment, I am taking steps to protect myself and my family from being forced to interact with ICE.

I am a survivor of the longest genocide of the 21st century, the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. I have witnessed firsthand what happens when governments, institutions, and corporations continue to fund, enable, or remain silent in the face of mass violence, ethnic cleansing, and forced displacement. The trauma of genocide does not end when one crosses a border. It lives in our bodies, our families, and our communities.

Maine has long been a leader in standing with the people of Darfur and with survivors of genocide. In fact, when I was just six years old, Governor John Baldacci supported legislation requiring Maine to divest from companies connected to Sudan, recognizing divestment as a principled stand against atrocities. That moment sits heavy in my heart and remains a powerful reminder that when my community protects and nourishes me, it is also my responsibility to continue to do the same in return.

Because of this history, and because of my lived experience, I strongly urge the state of Maine to once again lead with courage and integrity by fully divesting from any funding, contracts, or partnerships that support genocide, human rights abuses, and systems of mass harm, including mass deportation and the criminalization of immigrant communities. Our public funds should ever be used to separate families, detain asylum seekers, or contribute to racialized violence and displacement.

It is often said that keeping young people in Maine is a bipartisan priority. And yet, I must ask: why do our elders continue to pass laws and support systems that harm us? Why do they continue to create policies that push us out, criminalize our families, friends, and make it impossible for young people to build stable lives here?

Maine has the opportunity, once again, to lead with moral clarity. As a state that values human dignity, justice, and community care, Maine must take a firm stance against all forms of state-sanctioned violence—whether abroad through war and genocide or at home through deportation and detention.

I ask you to stand with survivors, refugees, immigrants, and all communities impacted by violence and displacement. Divestment is not only a financial decision; it is a declaration of values. It is a commitment to life, safety, liberty, and to justice.

Thank you for your time and for the responsibility you carry to protect us.

Sincerely,  
Sophia Uhmad