

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 3, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Earlier this month, an award-winning journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, was killed tragically by gunfire in the West Bank. Ms. Abu Akleh was one of eighteen journalists who have lost their lives this year in the course of their work. A free press is vital to an accountable, democratic government.

No journalist should face threats or violence for doing their job. As such, it is critical that we get to the bottom of what happened in the incident involving Ms. Abu Akleh. Recent sensationalist media accounts of the incident have not served the cause of truth. Only an independent investigation can resolve this situation, and provide solace to the families and all parties.

Israel has called for a joint investigation with Palestinian officials with the U.S. playing an observer role. The Palestinian Authority was quick to “reject and refuse the participation of any Israelis in this kind of investigation.”¹

Without access to the bullet that the Israelis have requested as part of an independent investigation, it is impossible to determine all the facts. This obstinate position serves no one, and will preclude any final determination of responsibility. One-sided releases of information will not get us closer to the truth.

We urge you to ask the Palestinian Authority to provide access to the forensic evidence in Abu Akleh’s death for an independent investigation, so that all parties can reach a definitive conclusion about the events leading to her death, and hold all parties accountable.

Please let us know what actions you plan to take in this urgent matter. Thank you.

¹ Linah Alsaafin, Umut Uras, Zena Al Tahhan and Farah Najjar. “Latest Abu Akleh Killing Updates: Palestine Rejects Israeli Probe. 11 May 2022. ”<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/11/veteran-al-jazeera-journalist-killed-by-israeli-forces-live-news>

Sincerely,



_____/s_____
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Fred Upton
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Ben Cline
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Darren Soto
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Peter Meijer
Member of Congress

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Tom Suozzi
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
David Joyce
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Jared Golden
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Dan Meuser
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
David Valadao
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Jim Costa
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Young Kim
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Elaine Luria
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Jason Smith
Member of Congress

_____/s_____
Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress