

July 18, 2023

Dear Members of Congress,

Over a year ago, Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was shot and killed while reporting on the Israeli military's invasion of a refugee camp in Jenin in the occupied West Bank. It is widely accepted by many media and human rights institutions, based on available witness testimony and forensic video and audio analysis, that Shireen Abu Akleh was killed by an Israeli soldier.

We mourn the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh and renew our call for justice and accountability for her death.

We, the undersigned organizations, call on Congress and the Biden administration to support Representative Andre Carson's Justice for Shireen Act to require necessary reporting to Congress by the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in an effort to learn all the unanswered questions leading up to, during and after the fatal shot that killed Ms. Abu Akleh. Additionally, this bill requires an identification of the individuals and entities that carried out, participated in, or were otherwise complicit in, or responsible for the death of Shireen Abu Akleh; and any United States defense materials or services that were implicated in the death of Ms. Abu Akleh.

Shireen Abu Akleh was a celebrated journalist who gave voice to Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation. Her death, on May 11, 2022, and the [violent attacks](#) on her funeral procession by Israeli police, horrified the [entire world](#). And yet, a forceful response from the United States government for accountability for her killing has been noticeably absent.

Several prominent media outlets, including [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#), the [Washington Post](#), and the [New York Times](#), as well as the [United Nations Human Rights Office](#), have conducted extensive investigations into Shireen Abu Akleh's death, utilizing a range of resources, including witness testimony, outside expertise, and visual evidence. They have all reached the same conclusion: there was no gunfire from Palestinian militants in the area and there is overwhelming evidence that an Israeli soldier was responsible for her death.

Over [100 members](#) of Congress have made [statements](#) or signed [letters](#) calling for a thorough U.S.-led investigation that results in accountability for those found responsible for the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh. President Biden even [called](#) for a "full and transparent accounting" of her death when he was in the region last year. In November 2022, [news](#) broke that the United States had opened a federal criminal investigation into Shireen's killing.

The U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority (USSC) recently delivered a report to the State Department regarding the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh. Senator Van Hollen (MD) [issued](#) a press release after viewing the classified USSC report stating, "I urge

the Administration to immediately declassify it in its entirety. I strongly believe that its public release is vital to ensuring transparency and accountability in the shooting death of American citizen and journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and to avoiding future preventable and wrongful deaths – goals we should all support.”

Shireen Abu Akleh’s killing is part of a systemic pattern of human rights abuses against Palestinians and the free press by the Israeli military. For more than two decades, the Committee to Protect Journalists has [recorded](#) at least 20 instances where journalists were killed by the Israeli military. Despite multiple internal investigations by the Israeli military, no one has been prosecuted or held accountable for these killings.

In September 2022, the [Israeli military](#) acknowledged a “high possibility” that Abu Akleh was “accidentally” shot and killed by Israeli fire. In May 2023, the Israeli military finally [expressed regret](#) for her death. Even still, they failed to accept responsibility and have taken no steps to hold anyone accountable for her killing. We need more answers and action from policymakers to bring about justice for Shireen Abu Akleh.

We call upon Congress to pass Representative Carson’s Justice for Shireen Act to require necessary reporting into Shireen Abu Akleh’s killing and urge Congress and the Biden administration to take immediate steps to ensure that U.S. military funding to the Israeli government does not support human rights abuses against Palestinians.

The United States has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that its military funding is not used to support actions that violate international humanitarian or human rights law. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to working with you to bring about justice for Shireen Abu Akleh.

Sincerely,

Adalah Justice Project
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
American Muslims for Palestine
Americans for Justice in Palestine Action
Amnesty International USA
Arab American Institute
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for International Policy
Center for Jewish Nonviolence
Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)
CODEPINK
Committee to Protect Journalists
CommonDefense.us

Community of Christ
Community Peacemaker Teams
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Defense for Children International - Palestine
Demand Progress Action
Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Fellowship of Reconciliation USA
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
Friends of Wadi Foquin
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Historians for Peace and Democracy
Human Rights Watch
If Not Now
Institute for Policy Studies New Internationalism Project
Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Jewish Voice for Peace Action
Just Foreign Policy
Justice Democrats
MADRE
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Migrant Roots Media
MPower Change Action Fund
National Council of Churches
National Lawyers Guild
Neighbors for Peace
Oxfam America
Palestine Legal
Pax Christi USA
Peace Action
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Progressive Democrats of America
Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
Project South
Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice
Reporters Without Borders
ReThinking Foreign Policy
RootsAction.org
U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Human Rights (USCPR)
U.S. Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)
United for Peace and Justice

United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR)
Washington Advocates for Palestinian Rights
Win Without War
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US
World BEYOND War
Yemen Freedom Council
Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation