

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We are writing regarding your July 9, 2024, response to our letter of April 10, 2024, about application of the Leahy law to Israel. In our letter we asked six specific questions. Your response consisted of generalities about the law and recited matters already in the public record.

In addition, since the time you responded, a number of further allegations of gross violations of human rights (GVHRs) by Israeli security forces have come to light, as has public reporting that suggests the State Department has not been properly applying the Leahy law. Therefore, given the seriousness of this ongoing issue, we request that you promptly provide substantive responses to each of the questions in our letter of April 10, and to each of the following additional questions. Your responses may be in classified form, if warranted:

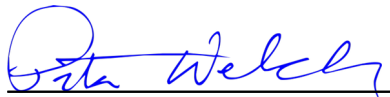
1. Since 2019, the Department has not provided to Congress a list of ineligible units of Israeli security forces. Does such a list exist? If so, when will such a list be provided to Congress?
2. If such a list exists, has the Department provided such a list to Israel? If not, why not? Is it the Department's position that the only five Israeli security force units to have ever committed GVHRs are those found this year to have also had those violations remediated?
3. The procedures for standard Leahy vetting are posted on the Department's website. Please provide a copy of the written procedures for the Israel Leahy Vetting Forum (ILVF). How do the ILVF procedures differ from Leahy vetting procedures for other countries?
4. On January 12, 2022, Omar Asad died from a stress-induced heart attack after he was bound, gagged, and left on the ground at a construction site by members of the Netzah Yehuda Battalion. Why did the Department find that the Netzah Yehuda Battalion had been adequately remediated when there was no sentence of incarceration for any of the soldiers involved in Omar Asad's death? Please provide in your response a description of the process for making this determination in accordance with the steps outlined in Tab A of the Joint Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of State (DOS) Policy on Remediation and the Resumption of Assistance under the Leahy Laws. Does the Department consider it credible that the stress-induced heart attack that caused Mr.

Asad's death was unrelated to the fact that he was bound, gagged, and left on the ground at a construction site in the middle of January?

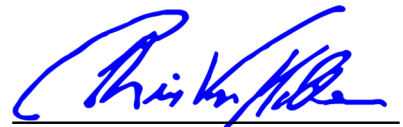
5. On September 6, 2024, in a case reminiscent of the shooting death of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, an Israeli soldier shot and killed American citizen Aysenur Ezgi Eygi. You rightly called the killing "unprovoked and unjustified." Have you informed Israel that the unit responsible for her death is ineligible for U.S. assistance under the Leahy law? If not, why not? It is our understanding that standard Leahy law practice, consistent with the letter and intent of the law, is to immediately halt assistance to units credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights until the foreign government is taking effective steps to bring the individuals responsible to justice.
6. On October 4, 2024, *Reuters* reported that in October 2023, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Deputy Assistant Secretary Christopher Le Mon wrote to other Department officials that there were "numerous reports" of the involvement of the Israeli unit Yamam in "gross violations of human rights." Has the State Department taken any steps to designate Yamam under the Leahy law? If not, why not?

Thank you for your assistance. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



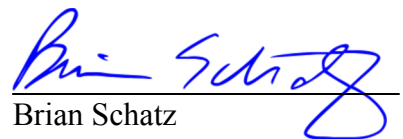
Peter Welch
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



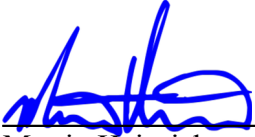
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



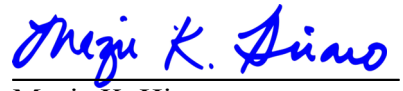
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

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Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

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Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

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Tina Smith
United States Senator