

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 21, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We are writing regarding the shooting death on May 11, 2022, of Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

We initially wrote to former President Biden on June 23, 2022, about this case, and then your predecessor on July 12, 2022. Copies of those letters are attached. Secretary Blinken responded on August 29, 2022. We have also attached a copy of Secretary Blinken's letter, in which he stated that "the [U.S. Security Coordinator] USSC concluded that gunfire from ISF positions . . . was likely responsible but that there was no evidence to indicate her killing was intentional." He also stated that cooperation among Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA), and the USSC "is the best path towards supporting a thorough, transparent, and impartial investigation, and the Department remains engaged with Israel and the PA on next steps." He stated that "we expect accountability" and the Administration would "continue to engage with Israel in seeking accountability and next steps of the investigation, as well as to encourage Israel to closely review its policies and practices and consider additional steps to mitigate civilian harm and prevent future similar tragedies."

With two and a half years having passed, we seek information regarding several important questions. In addition to requesting answers to questions 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 in our July 12th letter, we also request updates on the following:

1. What was the basis for the USSC's conclusion that Ms. Abu Akleh's killing was "unintentional"?
 - a. Did the Israeli Government determine the identity of the shooter, and if so, did the USSC interview the shooter or any of the other IDF personnel or other witnesses who were present when she was killed? If not, why not?
 - b. What evidence, if any, is there to support a conclusion that Ms. Abu Akleh, or anyone else in her proximity, was armed, or that the shooter acted in legitimate self-defense when he shot her?
2. What accountability, if any, has there been for those responsible for Ms. Abu Akleh's death?
3. What "next steps" were taken by the Israeli government in the investigation?

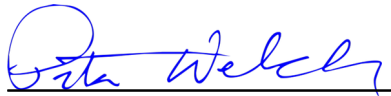
4. Has a “thorough, impartial, and transparent investigation” occurred? If so, by whom and with what result? If not, why not?
5. What changes, if any, did Israel make to its policies and practices “to mitigate civilian harm and prevent future similar tragedies,” because of Ms. Abu Akleh’s death, and with what result?
6. What is the status of the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) inquiry into this matter? Has the Israeli government cooperated in the DOJ effort?

We remain deeply troubled by Ms. Abu Akleh’s violent death. She was not only an innocent American citizen; she was a brave journalist who was killed doing her job. A thorough, transparent, and impartial investigation must be conducted, and there must be accountability. We urge the Administration to insist on nothing less.

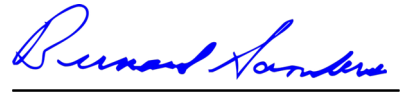
We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

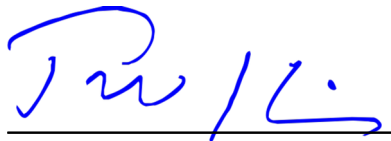
Sincerely,



Peter Welch
United States Senator



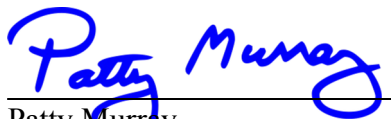
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



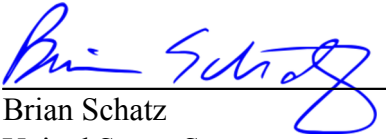
Patty Murray
United States Senator



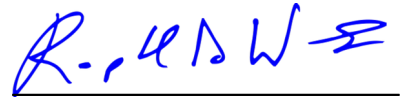
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Brian Schatz", written over a horizontal line.

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "R. Warnock", written over a horizontal line.

Raphael Warnock
United States Senator