Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Mr. Christopher Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigations
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Mr. Secretary and Director Wray:

We are writing you regarding the recent death of Shireen Abu Akleh, a 51 year-old Palestinian American. Ms. Abu Akleh, a journalist for Al Jazeera, was fatally shot in the West Bank city of Jenin on May 11, 2022. We request the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) launch an investigation into the death of Ms. Abu Akleh.

AP News reported that Ms. Abu Akleh was fatally shot in the head on the outskirts of the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank. Her producer, Palestinian journalist Ali Samoudi, was hospitalized in stable condition after being shot in the back. It was also reported that Palestinian journalists who were with Ms. Abu Akleh and Mr. Samoundi at the time said that they made their presence known to Israeli soldiers, and they did not see militants in the area. The Israeli military claimed that the victims were caught between gunfire between Palestinian militants and Israeli Defense Forces. However, media and eyewitnesses had conflicting reports. Shaza Hanaysheh, another Palestinian journalist among the reporters, also said that there were no clashes or shootings in the immediate area. News reports from the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *CNN*, and *Aljazeera* also highlight these conflicting reports.

As Members of Congress, we are deeply concerned by the death of Ms. Abu Akleh. Journalists worldwide must be protected at all costs. The U.S. State Department called Ms. Abu Akleh's death "an affront to media freedom." We welcome the actions and statements taken so far by the U.S. Department of State supporting a thorough investigation. However, given the tenuous situation in the region and the conflicting reports surrounding the death of Ms. Abu Akleh, **we request the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) launch an investigation into Ms. Abu Akleh's death.** We also request the U.S. Department of State determine whether any U.S. laws protecting Ms. Abu Akleh, an American citizen, were violated.

As an American, Ms. Abu Akleh was entitled to the full protections afforded to U.S. citizens living abroad. We, the undersigned Members of Congress, urge you to uphold the values that our nation was founded on, including human rights, equality for all, and freedom of speech. We have a duty to protect Americans reporting abroad. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
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/s/

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