

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–1304

April 23, 2026

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

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Secretary Rubio and Acting Attorney General Blanche:

We write with grave concern regarding the killing of U.S. citizen Khamis Ayyad, who died from smoke inhalation on July 31, 2025 after Israeli settlers set fires to homes and cars in the town of Silwad. Mr. Ayyad was the second U.S. citizen killed in the occupied West Bank in less than a month—after 20-year-old Saifullah Musallet was beaten to death by Israeli settlers on July 9¹—and one of nine Americans killed there since January 2022.² The U.S. government is charged with protecting its citizens abroad, and must conduct a thorough, credible, and independent investigation into Mr. Ayyad’s death.

Khamis Ayyad was a 40-year-old married father who raised his five children in Cicero, Illinois. According to Mr. Ayyad’s family, in the early morning hours of July 31, Mr. Ayyad awoke when Israeli settlers set fire to cars outside his home amidst a series of attacks on Palestinian villages.³ Witness reports indicate that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) later arrived at the scene and fired live rounds and tear gas.⁴ Mr. Ayyad’s family alleges he lost consciousness while trying to extinguish the fire and later died on his way to the hospital.⁵

¹ Ali Sawafta, *US citizen killed in West Bank settler attack*, Reuters (July 13, 2025),

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-aware-reported-death-american-after-beating-by-israeli-settlers-2025-07-12/>

² See Letter from U.S. Senators to Trump Administration Regarding Killing of Saifullah Kamel Musallet (July 25, 2025),

https://www.vanhollen.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/van_hollen_american_citizens_west_bank_letter.pdf (noting the killings of U.S. citizens Saifullah Musallet, Shireen Abu Akleh, Omar Assad, Tawfic Abdel Jabbar, Mohammad Ahmed Mohammad Khmour, Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, and Amer Mohammad Saada Rabee). U.S. citizen Nasrallah Abu Siyam was killed in February 2026, after the cited letter’s release.

³ See Tre Ward, *Palestinian-American man with ties to Cicero killed in West Bank, family says*, ABC7 Chicago (Aug. 1, 2025), <https://abc7chicago.com/post/palestinian-american-man-khamis-ayyad-raised-5-children-cicero-killed-west-bank-arson-fires-family-says/17397297/>

⁴ CBS News, *Palestinian American dies of smoke inhalation in West Bank after settlers set fires to cars, homes* (Aug. 3, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/palestinian-american-dies-smoke-inhalation-west-bank-confrontation-settlers-us-officials/>

⁵ William Christou and Sufian Taha, *Family of Palestinian American who died after Israeli settler attack calls for US intervention*, The Guardian (Aug. 6, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/aug/06/palestinian-american-killed-israeli-settler-attack-khamis-al-ayyad>

When asked about an investigation into Mr. Ayyad's killing, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce asserted that the Department has "called upon Israel to investigate each of these instances... We wait to see what those investigations will be, and that's the case here."⁶ However, none of Israel's investigations into the seven previous killings of U.S. citizens in the occupied West Bank since January 2022 has yielded accountability or criminal charges.⁷ Therefore, and especially given eyewitness reports that IDF soldiers' actions may have contributed to or even proximately caused Mr. Ayyad's death, we request written answers to the following questions:

- 1) What does the U.S. government currently know about the circumstances of Mr. Ayyad's killing?
- 2) Will the U.S. government conduct a thorough, credible, and independent investigation into the killing of Mr. Ayyad, including what the IDF did or failed to do given Israel's international obligations (including to ensure the protection of people under its occupation⁸)?
- 3) What is the proposed timeline for such an investigation, and will the U.S. government provide its findings in a written report to Congress and Mr. Ayyad's family?
- 4) How will the U.S. pursue accountability for Mr. Ayyad's death, including if the Israeli government refuses to cooperate with such an investigation?
- 5) What steps is the U.S. government taking to pursue accountability for the eight other Americans killed in the occupied West Bank since January 2022: Saifullah Musallet, Shireen Abu Akleh, Omar Assad, Tawfic Abdel Jabbar, Mohammad Ahmed Mohammad Khmour, Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, Amer Mohammad Saada Rabee, and Nasrallah Abu Siyam?
- 6) Finally, we note the recent surge in Israeli settler violence in the occupied West Bank, which was already at a historic high in 2025.⁹ What steps is the U.S.

⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Press Briefing – August 5, 2025* (Aug. 5, 2025), <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-august-5-2025>

⁷ See *supra*, note 2; Al Jazeera, *How US dealt with the cases of nine Americans killed by Israel since 2022* (July 18, 2025), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/18/how-us-dealt-with-the-cases-of-nine-americans-killed-by-israel-since-2022>; Ryan Lucas, *DOJ Silent as Families of Americans Killed in West Bank, Gaza Demand It Investigate*, NPR (Oct. 10, 2024), www.npr.org/2024/10/10/nx-s1-5106059/west-bank-gaza-israel-justice-department/

⁸ Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, art. 6, Aug. 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 135 (specifying that an "Occupying Power shall be bound, for the duration of the occupation, to the extent that such Power exercises the functions of government in such territory, by" provisions of the Convention that prohibit "violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds"); see also U.S. Department of State, *2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Israel, West Bank and Gaza* (last accessed Aug. 12, 2025), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/israel-west-bank-and-gaza/> (2023 State Department report referring to the West Bank as territory occupied by Israel).

⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *West Bank Monthly Snapshot - Casualties, Property Damage and Displacement* (Oct. 16, 2025), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/west-bank-monthly-snapshot-casualties-property-damage-and-displacement-september-2025>.

government taking to protect Americans citizens living or working as journalists in the occupied West Bank?

We appreciate your attention to these matters and look forward to your response no later than April 30, 2026.

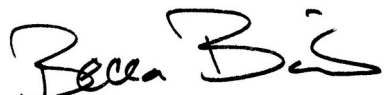
Sincerely,



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



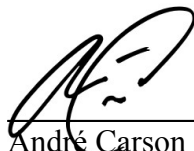
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



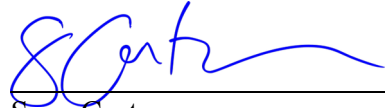
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



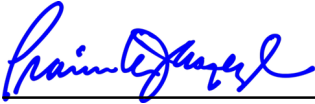
Al Green
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



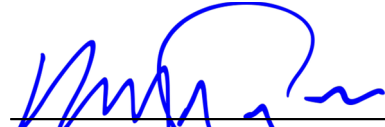
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



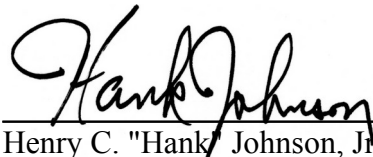
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



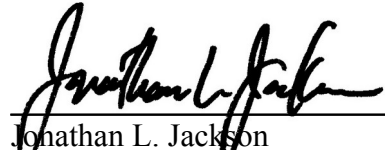
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



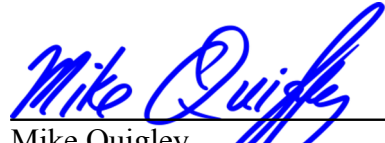
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress