

Statement from the Family of Shireen Abu Akleh

July 25, 2022

Our dear sister and aunt Shireen Abu Akleh was killed on May 11, 2022 by an Israeli sniper while on assignment in the occupied Palestinian city of Jenin. She was a prominent, beloved journalist and U.S. citizen, yet President Biden did not take us up on our request to meet with him during his visit to Israel and the occupied West Bank earlier this month, despite being a mere 10 minutes from our home.

Since the President didn't come to us in Jerusalem to hear first-hand our grief, outrage and concerns regarding his administration's lack of response to Shireen's extrajudicial killing, we decided to come to him.

We are in Washington, D.C. to insist on a thorough, credible, independent, and transparent U.S. investigation into the Israeli military's killing of our dear Shireen. As we wrote in [our letter](#) to President Biden ahead of his visit, the administration's July 4th statement was an affront to justice, and enabled Israel to avoid accountability for Shireen's murder. This is totally unacceptable to us, and it is unacceptable to the countless members of Congress who have echoed our call for justice and accountability.

If we allow Shireen's killing to be swept under the rug, we send a message that the lives of U.S. citizens abroad don't matter, that the lives of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation don't matter, and that the most courageous journalists in the world, those who cover the human impact of armed conflict and violence, are expendable.

For far too long, the United States has enabled Israel to kill with impunity by providing weapons, immunity, and diplomatic cover. Impunity leads to repetition. We are here to do our part to ensure that this cycle ends.

That is why, while in Washington this week, we are calling for:

- **President Biden** and **Secretary of State Blinken** to finally meet with us to discuss the status of Shireen's case and the administration's proposed next steps in pursuing justice and accountability. We have traveled here, to you, because we cannot let more time go by. Please, do not let us down.
- **Secretary of State Blinken** to respond to the requests we put to the Biden administration in [our July 8](#) letter, and that have been reaffirmed by members of

Congress. This includes the 13 questions posed to the Secretary by **Senator Chris Van Hollen** (D-Md.), **Senator Patrick Leahy** (D-Vt.), **Senator Chris Murphy** (D-Conn.), and **Senator Dick Durbin** (D-Ill.) in their [July 12 letter](#) concerning Shireen's killing. They asked Secretary Blinken to respond by July 26, which is tomorrow. We still need answers to these questions.

It's worth noting that, to date, 24 U.S. senators and 57 members of the House of Representatives have called on the Biden administration to initiate a thorough, credible, independent, and transparent U.S. investigation into Shireen's killing, and we are grateful to every single one of them. We will be meeting with some of these members this week, and we thank them for making time to discuss next steps around Shireen's case. (For reference: [May 19 letter](#) to Secretary Blinken and FBI Director Christopher Wray signed by **57 members of Congress**; [June 6 letter](#) to Secretary Blinken from **Senator Jon Ossoff** (D-Ga.) and **Senator Mitt Romney** (R-Ut.); [June 23 letter](#) to President Biden from **Senator Van Hollen** (D-Md.) and 23 of his senate colleagues.)

- The Biden administration to direct the **Department of Justice**, including the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions section (tasked with investigating war crimes against U.S. citizens) and the **Federal Bureau of Investigation**, and any other relevant U.S. offices or agencies, **to launch a thorough, credible, independent, and transparent investigation into Shireen's murder**. The Israeli military killed our beloved Shireen while she was doing the work we've always been so proud of her for doing, and they did so in broad daylight, in front of cameras, and then [brutally attacked her funeral procession](#).

The world expects answers. Shireen was only 51. She had so much life left to live.

We hope that our time in Washington this week will bring us closer to justice and accountability for Shireen. We will pursue accountability for her murder wherever it may take us. Shireen lived to uncover the truth behind every story, and so shall we.

-End-

The above statement is from Tony Abu Akleh, Shireen's brother, as well as her niece Lina Abu Akleh and nephew Victor Abu Akleh.