



Committee to Protect Journalists

May 7, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Acting Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

The Honorable Kash Patel
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
J. Edgar Hoover Building
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Re: Request for a U.S. criminal investigation into the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh

Dear Mr. Attorney General and Mr. Director,

I write on behalf of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) to urge you to provide a public progress update on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) investigation into the killing of [Shireen Abu Akleh](#), a U.S. citizen and journalist fatally shot on May 11, 2022, by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) while reporting in the West Bank city of Jenin. The effectively stagnant status of this case is inconsistent with ensuring the security of U.S. citizens anywhere in the world — a clear priority of President Donald J. Trump's administration.

Although the FBI reportedly [opened](#) an investigation into her killing in November 2022, it has made no demonstrable progress more than three later. At this point, CPJ is not aware that any formal interviews have been conducted with witnesses despite the willingness of multiple witnesses to cooperate. Moreover, there has been no signs of FBI investigative activity to gather other evidence in Israel or Palestine. This troubling lack of concrete progress — four years after Abu Akleh's death — represents a profound failure of the U.S. government to respond promptly and impartially to the killing of one of its citizens by a foreign military.

Multiple independent investigations, including by [The Associated Press](#), [The Washington Post](#), and [CNN](#), concluded that Abu Akleh was killed by IDF fire; some found evidence that she was deliberately targeted. In September 2022, the IDF released a [statement](#) on its internal probe concluding there was a

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"high possibility" she was "accidentally" killed by Israeli forces and declined to open a criminal investigation. In May 2023, IDF Chief Spokesperson Daniel Hagari [apologized](#) for her death on CNN.

Abu Akleh, 51, was a Palestinian American correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic and a household name across the Middle East, widely respected for her courageous and in-depth reporting on Palestinian life. She was clearly identified as press at the time of her killing, wearing a vest visibly marked "PRESS."

Her family has been waiting — and continues to wait — for a credible U.S. criminal investigation that delivers accountability and justice. To date, no one has been held accountable for her death.

We therefore urge you to support justice and accountability by:

- Providing a public update on the status of the investigation and reasons for delay.
- Committing to a timeline for the FBI to complete a thorough criminal investigation and to publicly release its findings, with full transparency as to the methodology and conclusions.
- Ensuring the investigation is impartial and independent, free from political considerations, and consistent with U.S. domestic laws and obligations recognized under international law, including U.N. Security Council Resolution 2222 (2015) on the protection of journalists in conflict zones.

The U.S. government has a legal and moral obligation to act when one of its citizens is killed, an obligation that transcends politics and that this administration has championed in other contexts. We urge you to honor that obligation without further delay. Abu Akleh's family has endured four years waiting for their government to pursue justice on their behalf.

Respectfully,

Gypsy Guillén Kaiser
Chief Global Affairs Officer
Committee to Protect Journalists