

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

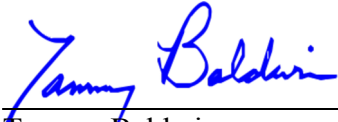
We are writing you regarding the recent death of Omar Abdulmajeed Assad, a 78 year-old former resident of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and a Palestinian American. Mr. Assad died after being stopped and detained by Israeli soldiers in the West Bank village of Jiljilya on January 12, 2022. We request the State Department launch an investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Assad's death, including the manner of Mr. Assad's detention and whether any equipment procured by United States funds were used by Israeli forces involved in his detention.

On January 23, 2022, the Washington Post reported that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) investigation into Mr. Assad's death "confirmed that the man was dragged from his car, blindfolded and handcuffed and then fell silent while being held at a construction site" and that "soldiers never sought medical aid" for him. Witnesses told the Washington Post that Mr. Assad was not breathing or conscious when the soldiers left, and a Palestinian doctor at the scene said that Mr. Assad died of an apparent heart attack. Those involved have not been suspended and, this reporting suggests, will not be indicted. Additionally, on January 26, 2022, the Washington Post reported details of recently released medical examination findings by the Palestinian Ministry of Justice that indicate Mr. Assad died from "stress-induced sudden cardiac arrest due to external violence."

As Members of Congress from Wisconsin, we are troubled by the death of Mr. Assad. We welcome the actions taken so far by the U.S. Department of State in expressing condolences to members of the Assad family and support for a thorough investigation by the Israeli government. However, given the tenuous situation in the region and the concerning and sometimes conflicting reports surrounding the detention and death of Mr. Assad, we request the State Department launch an investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Assad's death, including the manner of Mr. Assad's detention and whether any equipment procured by United States funds was used by Israeli forces. We also ask the U.S. Department of State determine whether any U.S. laws protecting Mr. Assad, an American citizen, were violated.

We strongly support human rights and the rule of law as the foundation of United States foreign policy. As a Palestinian American, Mr. Assad deserves the full protections afforded U.S. citizens living abroad and his family deserves answers. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress