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May 13, 2022

The Honourable Minister Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Melanie.Joly@international.gc.ca
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RE: Canada must denounce and call for an independent investigation into the killing of Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh

Dear Minister Joly:

It is with deepening sorrow that The United Church writes again within the same week urging you to take urgent and immediate action to protect Palestinian human rights. Today, thousands of Palestinians gathered in occupied East Jerusalem to pay their respects to murdered Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh as she was laid to rest. Eyewitnesses present on the ground have told The United Church that [mourners were beaten by Israeli police](#) as they carried Abu Akleh's coffin to Mount Zion Cemetery to be buried beside her parents. Canada must condemn the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, and demand an independent investigation into her killing.

Reports on autopsy results carried out on the body of Shireen Abu Akleh say that she was killed by a bullet to the head which struck underneath the protective metal helmet she wore. She was also clearly identified as press and could not have been misidentified as an immediate threat. [B'Tselem](#), a highly respected Israeli human rights organization and a United Church partner, has stated that its initial investigation proves that the Israeli army narrative about the shooting of Abu Akleh is untrue. A thorough and independent investigation is crucial.

In [your tweet](#) following the news of Abu Akleh's killing, you rightly stated that "Journalists must be safe to do their work – a right protected under international law." Without pressure from Canada and others in the international community for an immediate and independent investigation into who is responsible and accountable for the violation of international law in the killing Abu Akleh, these violations will continue to happen with impunity, as they have just this week alone (see our letter to you dated May 10th regarding forcible expulsions of Palestinians in Masafer Yatta).

The United Church of Canada calls on Canada to:

- publicly denounce the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, and call for an immediate independent investigation into her killing which holds those responsible accountable.

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We would look forward to hearing from you regarding a meeting on this issue.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu
Executive Minister, Church in Mission Unit
The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

C.c.:
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