



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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

May, 19, 2022

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I write to express my profound shock and sadness concerning the death of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in Jenin, the West Bank, on May 11 and the deplorable disruption of her funeral procession on May 13.

I join the acting general secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Ioan Sauca, in calling for an independent international investigation of Akleh's killing and for those responsible for her death to be held accountable to the full extent of the law.

I was outraged when Akleh's funeral was attacked, and I must protest this action in the strongest terms. Even if, as the Israeli police reportedly claim, they were responding to stone throwing, video evidence proves that their response was disproportional and beyond any acceptable norm of police conduct.

These acts indicate a culture of impunity with regard to Israel's conduct in the occupied territories, also evident in the ongoing demolition of Palestinian homes at Masafer Yatta and elsewhere, and in settler attacks on Palestinians that Israeli forces do little or nothing to halt or prevent. Acts of violence involving individuals, groups and states must end, and those responsible must be held accountable.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reiterates its call for the United States to monitor and track gross human rights violations committed by Israeli armed forces and police and to ensure that U.S. military and financial assistance provided to the government of Israel be used in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards. Instead of issuing statements, the U.S. government must take specific, concrete actions against Israeli impunity when these standards are not upheld.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America