

September 28, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Fatal Shooting of U.S. Citizen Mahmoud Shaalan By Israeli Soldiers

Dear Mr. President,

The undersigned organizations call on your administration to demand that Israel publicly release all evidence related to the recent investigation into the fatal shooting of U.S. citizen, Mahmoud Shaalan, by Israeli soldiers six months ago.

We also urge your administration to conduct an investigation into the killing. As Mahmoud Shaalan was a U.S. citizen, the U.S. government has a particular responsibility to ensure that a thorough, proper and impartial investigation is conducted. As the largest supplier of weapons, munitions and security equipment to Israel, the U.S. government bears the added responsibility of verifying that no U.S. supplied arms were used in an unlawful killing.

On February 26, Mahmoud Shaalan, a 16-year-old Palestinian-American born and raised in Florida, was shot by Israeli soldiers multiple times at a checkpoint near the Beit El settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Israeli army claims that he had stabbed a soldier and was threatening others when he was shot, but eyewitness testimony contradicts this account. In addition, Israel has not released any details or evidence collected from their stated investigation, including video footage from any checkpoint surveillance cameras.

After Mahmoud Shaalan was shot, soldiers reportedly stripped his body, left him bleeding on the road for more than two hours, and prevented a Palestinian ambulance from approaching. Mahmoud Shaalan was killed during a period of increased violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While Israeli soldiers and civilians have faced attacks by Palestinians using knives, Israeli forces have carried out a series of unlawful killings of Palestinians as well. Incidents in which Palestinians were deliberately shot dead by Israeli forces when they posed no imminent threat to life, in what appear to have been extrajudicial executions, have been repeatedly documented. In some cases, the person shot was left bleeding to death on the ground and was not given prompt medical assistance, as in the case of Mahmoud Shaalan.

According to news reports earlier this month, Israeli authorities have informed U.S. officials that they found no criminal wrongdoing by soldiers involved in Mahmoud Shaalan's case, and that Israel will not further pursue the case. Israel has not released any details or evidence collected from the investigation. Previous investigations conducted by the Israeli authorities have not been independent, transparent or credible, raising serious concerns about impunity for wrongful actions by the security forces.

Mr. President, we urge you to take action so that an apparent unlawful killing of a U.S. citizen abroad does not go unpunished.

Respectfully,

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

American Muslims for Palestine

Amnesty International USA

Arab-American Institute (AAI)

Center for Constitutional Rights

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Defense for Children International - Palestine

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)

Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP)

National Lawyers Guild (NLG)

Presbyterian Church (USA)

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

United Methodist Kairos Response

US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation