

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2019

His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister of the State of Israel
Prime Minister's Office
3 Kaplan St. Hakiryia
JERUSALEM 91950

Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu,

We respectfully write to urge your government to reconsider the decision to deport **Mr. Omar Shakir**, Director of the Israel and Palestine Office of Human Rights Watch (HRW) based in Israel. As strong supporters of Israel and U.S.-Israeli relations, we are deeply troubled by Israel's decision to deport a U.S. citizen and employee of one of the most internationally reputable human rights organizations in the world.

As Members of the U.S. Congress who have been following this case closely through the Israeli courts over the last year, we have grave concerns about the Israeli government's decision to revoke Mr. Shakir's work permit due to his human rights advocacy. We are disappointed that the Jerusalem District Court denied the organization's legal challenge and has given him until May 1, 2019 to leave Israel.

To carry out our own human rights work and responsibilities in the U.S. House of Representatives, we rely on the reports of Human Rights Watch for balanced accounts of human rights violations wherever they may occur, including here in the United States. As you know, Human Rights Watch investigates and reports on human rights abuses in more than 90 countries, including every country in the Middle East and North Africa. HRW has covered rights abuses in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory by all parties, including the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, for nearly three decades. In fact, its most recent report is the October 2018 publication, *Two Authorities, One Way, Zero Dissent: Arbitrary Arrest & Torture Under the Palestinian Authority & Hamas*.

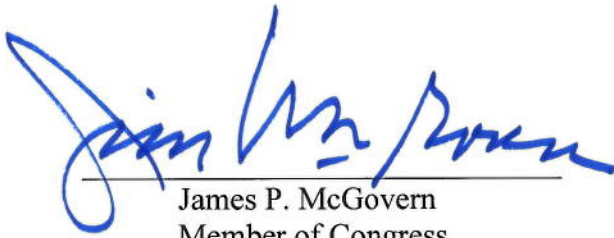
As your Interior Ministry acknowledged a year ago, neither Human Rights Watch nor Mr. Shakir as its representative promote boycotts of Israel. This alone should provide you with grounds to reverse the decision of the Jerusalem District Court. Rather, evidence against Mr. Shakir focused on HRW's recommendation that businesses should cease activities in or with West Bank settlements, which are illegal under international law. If you are familiar with HRW's work globally, it often urges businesses to cease activities where and when such commercial interests are unable to mitigate the human rights harm to which they contribute or are unwittingly in violation of international law. Such activity is neither exclusive to Israel nor part of any local or international campaign to boycott Israel. We are, therefore, deeply concerned that the decision

to deport Mr. Shakir serves only to reinforce the impression that Israel is increasingly hostile to human rights defenders and the work of reputable international, Israeli and Palestinian human rights advocacy and research institutions.

Mr. Prime Minister, we urgently request that you reconsider and reverse the decision to deport U.S. citizen, Mr. Omar Shakir, and to renew his work permit so he may continue his duties as director of the Israel and Palestine Office of Human Rights Watch.

We appreciate your immediate attention and fair consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



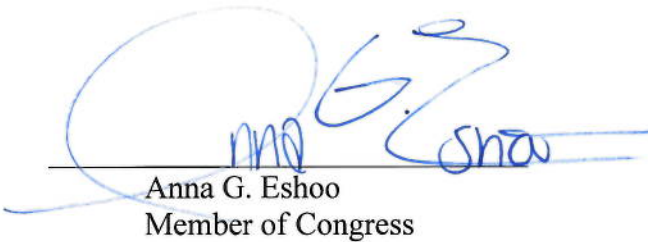
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



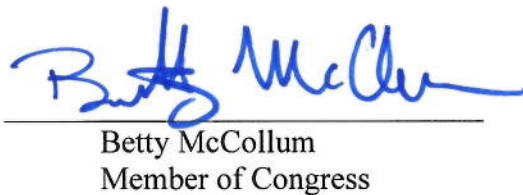
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



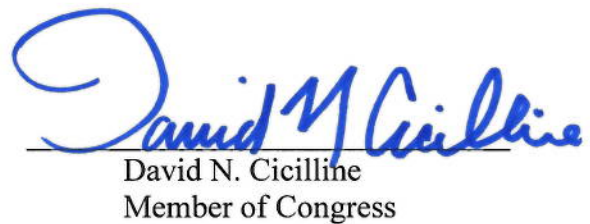
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress




Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



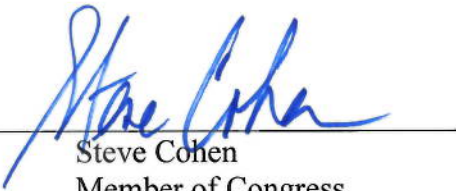
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

cc: Supreme Court Justices and Registrars
Aryeh Machluf Deri, Minister of the Interior
Ron Dermer, Ambassador to the United States