



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2020

Her Excellency Dina Kawar
Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
3504 International Drive NW
Washington DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Kawar:

We write concerning Ahlam Ahmad Al-Tamimi, a Jordanian woman who for the past three years has faced Federal terrorism charges in the United States. Despite this, she lives a free and unrestricted life in Jordan, residing at an address that for years has been known to the Jordanian and US authorities and to the media¹. She has never at any stage lived in hiding.

Tamimi has repeatedly boasted of masterminding the Sbarro pizzeria bombing on August 9, 2001, an act of unusual barbarism done in the name of the Hamas terrorist organization. This resulted in the deaths of 15 innocents, among them two American citizens. From her safe haven in Jordan and with evident pride, she has called the massacre “*my operation*” and says she chose the target because of the young Jewish families and children who frequently thronged it.

Tamimi accompanied the bomber, Izz-al din Shuheil al Masri, helping him smuggle the guitar case rigged with explosives from Ramallah past Israeli security manning a crossing on Jerusalem’s northern edge. Minutes before the huge blast, Tamimi fled the scene to save herself, returning to Ramallah where she read the evening news – starting with the report of her own lethal handiwork – for an Arab television station.

She was soon arrested, confessed to all the charges before an Israeli court, and was sentenced to 16 life terms. But she was released under duress as part of the October 2011 Shalit Deal between Israel and Hamas and, like the other 1,026 Palestinian convicts in the deal, was granted a conditional commutation of sentence to secure the freedom of an Israeli hostage held illegally by Hamas.

On release, Tamimi returned to Jordan, the place she was born and educated and where she had lived with her parents until finishing high-school in 1998. In October 2011, immediately after her triumphant return to Amman, she embarked on a career as an advocate for murderous extremism of the kind the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a key strategic ally of the US, is formally committed to ending.

¹ See for instance this Al Jazeera video news report <https://youtu.be/hXbHIIImrfcII>

She returned to television in February 2012, presenting a weekly Hamas-produced show advocating Palestinian terror, produced in Amman and transmitted from there throughout the world. This went to air weekly until September 2016. At no stage, as far as is known, did Jordan's authorities interfere with it.

Today, appallingly, Tamimi is a media celebrity, the subject of wide popular admiration. She has appeared publicly side-by-side with prominent political figures and received extraordinary recognition in Jordan's mainstream press and television media as a respected commentator and as an object of Jordanian national pride. She has been showered with acclaim by the students of the Arab world's most important graduate school of journalism, the Amman-based Jordan Media Institute, who declared her to be their "success model". For five years she traveled widely and often to deliver public speeches throughout Jordan and in numerous Arab countries beyond Jordan's borders. Her theme has always centered on promoting terror and terrorists.

US Federal charges were first brought against Tamimi in mid-2013. The US then delivered a formal extradition request under the treaty between our two countries that had been signed in Washington on March 28, 1995 and that entered into force July 29, 1995. The Hashemite Kingdom refused. It continues to refuse until today. This is a matter of grave and growing concern to the Congress and to all Americans. The American view concerning the treaty is that it is certainly valid. It continues to be listed in the US government's authoritative Treaties in Force document².

On March 14, 2017, Justice Department officials in Washington DC officially announced US Federal terrorism charges against Tamimi and added her the same day to the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list. There is a \$5 Million State Department reward for her capture and conviction.

We are aware that just days after the Department of Justice's March 2017 Tamimi announcement, Jordan's highest court ruled that a technical flaw existed under Jordanian constitutional law. However we are also aware that up until the Tamimi case and its *Israeli* victims, Jordan had extradited terrorists to the United States multiple times. We appreciate that it is Jordanian law that defines how questions like this are resolved. But we also understand that the flaw to which Jordan's senior judges referred can be repaired. Indeed it could have been repaired at any time in the past quarter century since it came into effect.

As you know, in November 2019, the State Department, clarifying the American position, said³ of the 1995 treaty: "The United States regards the extradition treaty as valid."

We note as well that Jordan has or is currently finalizing extradition treaties with Australia, Ukraine, France, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan among others. The kingdom has long had extradition arrangements with numerous Arab states.

As lawmakers ourselves, seeing Jordan provide a confessed bomber with legal impunity while rebuffing an arrest warrant and extradition request from its most significant ally and friend, the United States, amounts to a deeply troubling scenario.

The US Congress, as you know, legislated sanctions in December 2019 which, subject to certain conditions, will apply to "*a country which has notified the Department of State of its refusal to extradite to the United States any individual indicted for a criminal offense*" [certain details follow] and is "*a country with which the*

² <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-TIF-Bilaterals-6.13.2019-web-version.pdf> at page 244

³ <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2018/> - at page 135

United States maintains diplomatic relations and with which the United States has an extradition treaty” and “that country is in violation of the terms and conditions of the treaty”.

The potential seriousness of these sanctions provisions reflect the deep concern of the Congress, the Administration and the American people. We believe it is of the highest importance to US/Jordan relations that an outcome is found that honors Jordanian law while ensuring this unrepentant terrorist and murderer of innocent Americans is brought to US justice. Extraditing Tamimi within the framework of a long-standing, effective treaty is a powerful statement that Jordan will not tolerate terrorism nor its promotion.

We reaffirm our appreciation for His Majesty King Abdullah II and his inspirational leadership and look forward to the further flourishing of our mutually important alliance. We respectfully await your response.

Sincerely,



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S
Member of Congress



Ted S. Yoho
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



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