

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

June 1, 2022

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

Dear Mr. President:

In the United States we are only beginning to grapple with the latest massacres in Buffalo, NY and Uvalde, TX. We stand on the side of those calling for a strong response at the federal, state, and local levels to fight gun violence. It is long past time to deal with this scourge which has taken the lives of so many men, women, and children.

Even as we struggle to cope with our own national tragedies, as co-chairs of the Friends of a Free, Stable, and Democratic Syria Caucus here in Congress, we write to call your attention to another horrific massacre that occurred thousands of miles away in Tadamon, Syria in April 2013. As you may be aware, 41 Syrian civilians were murdered as they were forcefully marched toward an open pit, shot, and buried in a mass grave.

Information about this inhumane act of brutality was a result of the work of scholars at the University of Amsterdam's Holocaust and Genocide Center. The video obtained was distributed by [The Guardian](#)<sup>i</sup> newspaper this past April, with additional documentation cited in a [New/Lines Magazine story](#)<sup>ii</sup>. The multi-year investigation into the 2013 Tadamon massacre, conducted by Professor Uğur Ümit Üngör and researcher Annsar Shahhoud, not only led to the release of this video but also uncovered that the crime was committed by Syrian Military Intelligence (SMI) Branch 227, commanded by Jamal al-Ismaïl, and physically carried out by Jamal al-Khatib and Amjad Youssef, members of the unit. Jamal al-Ismaïl's commanding officer is SMI division chief Shafiq Massa, who works directly for Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, both of whom bear ultimate responsibility for the crime.

On April 29, 2022, the State Department responded to the massacre and demanded "accountability and justice for the crimes, violations, and abuses committed against Syrians..." by the Assad regime in Tadamon and during their multi-year campaign of terror. We thank you for this strong and direct statement.

As you are aware, both Syrian Military Intelligence (SMI) and SMI Branch 227 are currently designated as Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs). SMI was [designated in May 2011](#)<sup>iii</sup> pursuant to E.O. 13572 ("[Blocking Property of Certain Persons with Respect to Human Rights Abuses in Syria](#)<sup>iv</sup>", April 2011). SMI Branch 227 was [designated in 2021](#)<sup>v</sup> pursuant to E.O. 13572 for being owned or controlled by SMI. Additionally, Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad has been designated under E.O. 13573 and E.O. 13894.

We are highlighting the information collected and developed at the University of Amsterdam's Holocaust and Genocide Center with our deep-seated hope that your Administration impose sanctions under E.O.13572 against the individuals who have been documented to have participated in this heinous act of inhumanity. While Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad bears ultimate responsibility for all war crimes committed against the Syrian people, his allies continue to act on his behalf and must be held accountable. These individuals are Jamal al-Ismael, Jamal al-Khatib, Amjad Youssef and Shafiq Massa.

The United States, along with our allies and partners, are in the early stages of creating a mechanism for accountability in Ukraine so that Vladimir Putin and his regime do not evade justice. As we know, the brutality Putin brought to Ukraine was first deployed in Syria, and we believe that America must use the tools we have available to bring global attention to the Assad regime's crimes against humanity and impose sanctions on all perpetrators.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress

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i Lamborn, K. (2022, May 5). A hidden war crime: footage sheds light on horrors of war in Syria. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2022/apr/27/a-hidden-war-footage-sheds-light-on-horrors-of-war-in-syria-video-explainer>

ii Üngör, U. Ü. (2022, May 4). How a Massacre of Nearly 300 in Syria Was Revealed. New Lines Magazine. <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/how-a-massacre-of-nearly-300-in-syria-was-revealed/>

iii Administration Takes Additional Steps to Hold the Government of Syria Accountable for Violent Repression Against the Syrian People. (2022, May 26). U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg1181>

iv Executive Order 13572 --Blocking Property of Certain Persons with. (2013, April 30). Whitehouse.Gov. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/29/executive-order-13572-blocking-property-certain-persons-respect-human-ri>

v Treasury Sanctions Syrian Regime Prisons, Officials, and Syrian Armed Group. (2022, May 26). U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0292>