

October 5, 2022

Merrick B. Garland
U.S. Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

RE: Request for information about the investigation into the terrorist attack that killed Alex Odeh

Dear Attorney General Garland:

In support of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), we, the undersigned organizations, join with ADC to urge you bring to justice those responsible for the murder of Alexander “Alex” Michael Odeh. An Arab-American organizer and civil rights icon, Alex was the victim of a coordinated series of attempts to intimidate and silence ADC.

Mr. Odeh was assassinated on October 11, 1985 when a pipe bomb exploded as he opened the front door of ADC’s Santa Ana office. Following the attack, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) classified the bombing as an act of domestic terrorism and designated the investigation into the case as the highest national priority. Nearly four decades after a terrorist attack on American soil, not a single suspect has been named and the case remains unresolved.

Nearly four decades after Mr. Odeh’s death, no one has yet been brought to justice for this act of terrorism on American soil.

Mr. Odeh was a tireless Arab-American peace activist who committed his life to protecting civil and human rights in the U.S. and abroad, and to promoting peace and mutual understanding between diverse communities. He was a poet, and a lecturer of Arabic Language and Middle East History at Coastline College in Santa Ana, California. As his wife, Norma Odeh, described him, “He was a support organizer with a unique talent for bringing people of all races and religions together to work side by side for the common good of all mankind.”

Following the 1985 terrorist attack the FBI received leads about potential suspects responsible for the attack, confirming in July of 1986 that they had identified specific suspects. It has been over 35 years since any substantive public update on the case, and it remains an open investigation. Even with the Odeh family and ADC recognized as victims of one of the prime suspects, there has been neither resolution nor justice. Each year that passes, each milestone celebrated by the Odeh family, is a stark reminder of what has been lost. Mr. Odeh’s grandchildren will never meet their grandfather, never see his smile, never hear him say “I love you”; they can only rely on the memories and stories told to them.

We uplift ADC’s request for a meeting between them, the Odeh family, and yourself. The value of the Department of Justice and FBI providing them with the assurance that they have not been forgotten cannot be overstated. Above all else, we strongly encourage you to recommit and rededicate all resources available to ensure justice is served, giving long overdue closure for a family and community still grieving.

Sincerely,

American Muslims for Palestine
Arab American Civic Council
Center for Disability Rights
Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Defending Rights & Dissent
Emgage Action
Episcopal Peace Fellowship – Palestine Israel Network
Friends of Sabeel, North America (FOSNA)
Friends of Sabeel – LA/OC Chapter
JACL
Muslim Advocates
Muslim Public Affairs Council
NAACP
National Network for Arab American Communities
PFLAG National
RootsAction.org
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
The Sikh Coalition