Dear Mr. Thompson, Ms. Levien, Mr. Bascobert, and Ms. Veerasingham:

We write to express grave concern over reports that freelance photojournalists working for your organizations were present at the scene of Hamas' deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. Their early morning presence at the breached border raises serious ethical questions about whether they had advance knowledge of Hamas’ plan and not only failed to alert authorities, but even joined the attackers, as evidenced by photographs purportedly showing a photojournalist wielding weapons alongside terrorists.

This potentially implicates them as accomplices in war crimes and crimes against humanity in violation of international law and human rights conventions.

A recent investigation\(^1\) identified six specific photojournalists - Hassan Eslaiah, Yousef Masoud, Ali Mahmud, Hatem Ali, Mohammed Fayq Abu Mostafa and Yasser Qudih - who captured appalling images of civilians ruthlessly murdered, synagogues bombed, and families torn apart during the attack.\(^2\) Some appeared to have crossed into Israel with the Hamas terrorists, taking close-up photos as they kidnapped babies from their mothers’ arms and executed innocent civilians at point blank range. Photos have surfaced of some photojournalists posing for selfies with Hamas terrorists,\(^3\) and another purported CNN photographer was pictured on his own social media account holding a grenade as he joins Hamas terrorists on the October 7 massacre.\(^4\) This raises alarming questions about whether they coordinated with Hamas in advance or had prior knowledge of the imminent attack.

As you know, estimates are that over 1,200 Israeli civilians were murdered in this horrific attack, including hundreds of children. Over 200 Israeli men, women, and children were kidnapped and held in Gaza, where torture is rampant. If these photojournalists had prior knowledge and failed to alert authorities, they may be complicit in the death of hundreds of innocent civilians and numerous war crimes.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) @DrEliDavid, X (Nov. 9, 2023, 10:30 AM), https://twitter.com/DrEliDavid/status/172637894592942473?\(s=20\).

That your organizations purchased, published, or licensed images from individuals who potentially conspired with terrorists poses profound integrity issues.\(^6\) Furthermore, the Associated Press removed some of their names from images after these concerns surfaced.\(^7\)

As part of our Congressional oversight responsibilities, we request that you clarify the circumstances under which these photographers were operating during the attack, including any coordination with Hamas. Please provide the information requested below by December 22, 2023:

1. The full names, nationalities, and employment status of the six photojournalists identified in the investigation. Were they on assignment for your organization?
2. Any communications or transactions, including, but without limitation, phone logs, financial records, and communications between your organization and your contractors, and/or between the contractors and Hamas members prior to, during, and following the October 7 attack.
3. What times they were present at the border on October 7 and the nature of their movements.
4. Whether your organization purchased or licensed images/footage from the October 7 attack from them, including transaction records.
5. Any disciplinary actions taken regarding this incident.
6. Your policies on ethical obligations to report impending violence.
7. Communication your organization had with government officials prior to the attack regarding potential warnings.
8. Actions you will take to investigate this matter and uphold ethical standards.

We have reached out to the Department of Justice and State Department regarding the possibility of these individuals being designated as terrorist affiliates.

Our Congressional Committees take these allegations very seriously and will use its oversight authority to fully investigate this matter and ensure proper accountability. We will not rule out subpoenas if the requested information is not provided promptly. Please provide the requested information by December 22, 2023.

Sincerely,

Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress

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\(^6\) Reuters Denies It Had Prior Knowledge of Oct. 7 Hamas Attack on Israel, Reuters (Nov. 9, 2023), [https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/reuters-denies-it-had-prior-knowledge-oct-7-hamas-attack-israel-2023-11-09/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/reuters-denies-it-had-prior-knowledge-oct-7-hamas-attack-israel-2023-11-09/).

\(^7\) Itamar Sharon, Israel Demands Clarification from Global Media Over Photographers During Hamas Assault, TIMES OF ISRAEL (Nov. 10, 2023), [https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-demands-clarification-from-global-media-over-photographers-during-hamas-assault/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-demands-clarification-from-global-media-over-photographers-during-hamas-assault/).
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress

Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress

Ralph Norman
Member of Congress

Ben Cline
Member of Congress

W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress

Andy Ogle
Member of Congress

Andy Biggs
Member of Congress

Alex X. Mooney
Member of Congress
cc:
Mr. Steve Hasker, President and Chief Executive Officer, Thomson Reuters
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Department of Justice