

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

July 13, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth  
Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Admiral Brad Cooper  
Commander U.S. Central Command  
U.S. Central Command  
7115 South Boundary Boulevard  
MacDill AFB, FL 33621-5101

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Admiral Cooper:

We write regarding the Department of Defense's investigation into the February 28, 2026 strike on Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School for girls in Minab, Iran, which reportedly killed approximately 120 children and at least 175 people in total. If true, this incident would constitute the U.S. military's largest civilian casualty incident since 1991. The Department must promptly provide Congress with the complete and unredacted investigation, and submit a concrete plan to ensure such a tragedy does not happen again.

Recent press reporting indicates that the investigation ordered by Admiral Cooper was submitted in April but remains under review by senior DoD leadership. That reporting further indicates that investigators have identified multiple potential failures, including that an analyst noted as early as 2019 that the site appeared to have changed from a naval facility into a school, but that remark was entered into a digital intelligence tool that was not connected to the authoritative targeting database used to develop strike targets. The reporting also indicates that the site was reviewed multiple additional times in subsequent years without the targeting database being updated. Additional reporting from this week alleges that warnings were made in the system indicating the intelligence for the targets was dated, but those warnings were ignored for "expediency" even though the Administration spent weeks planning for President Trump's war of choice.

These reported issues, if accurate, raise deeply troubling questions about the integrity of U.S. target development, the adequacy of target validation and vetting procedures, the interoperability of intelligence and targeting databases, the timeliness and reliability of intelligence used for lethal targeting, and the Department's implementation of civilian harm mitigation policies. They also raise urgent questions about whether the Department has sufficient targeting personnel, training, accountability mechanisms, and technical safeguards to support large-scale conventional operations.

More than four months after the strike, and after the reported submission of the investigation in April, Congress and the American people still have not received the Department's investigation and findings. There is no justification for withholding an unclassified accounting of what happened, what went wrong, and what the Department is doing to prevent recurrence.

Accordingly, we request that the Department of Defense and U.S. Central Command take the following actions no later than July 20, 2026:

1. Promptly finalize the investigation into the February 28 strike on Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School and provide Congress with the complete and unredacted investigation.
2. Provide an unclassified version of the report to Congress, suitable for public release.
3. Submit to Congress a prevention and remediation plan that identifies the specific corrective actions the Department will take to ensure this does not happen again.
4. Provide a briefing to Congress on the investigation and all steps being taken to ensure errors of this kind do not happen again.

The United States military has a legal and moral obligation to take all feasible precautions to prevent civilian harm. When a U.S. strike kills civilians, the Department owes Congress, the American people, and the victims' families a clear accounting of what happened and a credible plan to prevent future failures.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



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Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



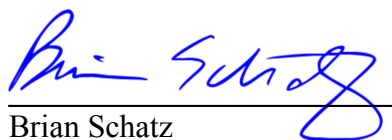
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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



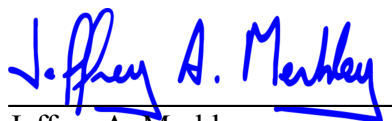
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Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



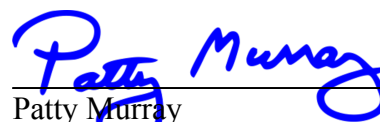
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Andy Kim  
United States Senator



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Angela D. Alsobrooks  
United States Senator



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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



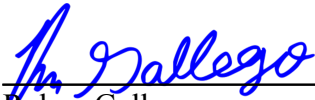
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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

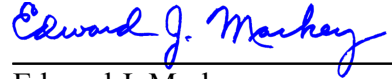


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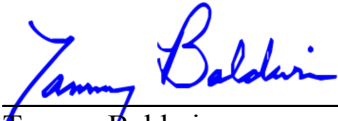
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego  
United States Senator



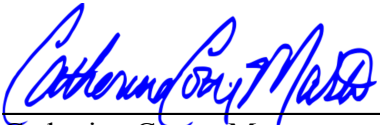
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



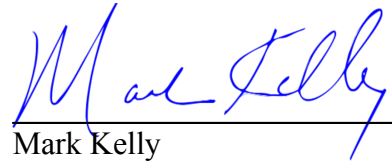
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



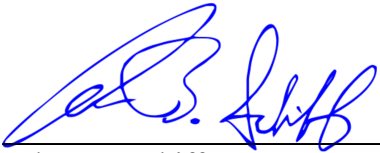
Elissa Slotkin  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Peter Welch  
United States Senator