



One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

The Committee on Homeland Security (Committee) is conducting an investigation into circumstances surrounding the employment of Ms. Nejwa Ali with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Prior to joining USCIS in 2019, Ms. Ali served as a spokeswoman for the Palestine Liberation Organization's delegation to the United States.¹ The Committee is deeply concerned about the security and background checks conducted by the Department prior to hiring Ms. Ali, who published extremist, antisemitic views online, following the recent terrorist attack on Israel.²

According to recent reports, Ms. Ali, who is currently an adjudications officer at USCIS, has a troubling history of posting extremist rhetoric on her social media accounts.³ Her rhetoric intensified on October 7, 2023,⁴ when the terrorist group, Hamas, launched a brutal, surprise attack on Israel during a major Jewish holiday.⁵ Ms. Ali made several posts glorifying the attacks on Israel, including a post with a photograph of an armed terrorist.⁶ This is an apparent effort to celebrate Hamas terrorists who utilized paragliders to descend into Israel to murder innocent civilians. Ms. Ali also made several extreme antisemitic posts, including one declaring "Israeli, American privilege is disgusting" and another with a video captioned, "Fuck Israel and any Jew that supports Israel."⁷ Ms. Ali's disturbing social media activity calls into question her impartiality and fitness to hold a position tasked with adjudicating asylum claims, that may include Jewish people fleeing persecution.

¹ Luke Rosiak, *The U.S. Gov't Hired a Pro-Hamas PLO Spokeswoman to Handle Asylum Claims*, THE DAILY WIRE, Oct. 18, 2023, <https://www.dailywire.com/news/the-u-s-govt-hired-a-pro-hamas-plo-spokeswoman-to-handle-asylum-claims>; Nick Mordowanec, *DHS Officer Praises Hamas Attacks: "Ready" for Israel's Downfall*, NEWSWEEK, Oct. 18, 2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/dhs-officer-praises-hamas-attacks-israel-1835908>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Rosiak, *supra* note 1.

⁵ Josef Federman & Issam Adwan, *Hamas Surprise Attack Out of Gaza Stuns and Leaves Hundreds Dead in Fighting, Retaliation*, AP NEWS, Oct. 7, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-hamas-rockets-airstrikes-tel-aviv-11fb98655c256d54ecb5329284fc37d2>.

⁶ Rosiak, *supra* note 1.

⁷ *Id.*

The Department must ensure all DHS employees—and especially those in security-related positions—demonstrate objectivity and impartiality and not call into question DHS’s work. Ms. Ali’s antisemitic statements show that she cannot meet this critical standard. On October 12, 2023, you delivered a keynote address at the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, where you spoke about the “[Biden] Administration’s commitment to confronting anti-Semitic violence in our country, and to highlight our first-ever National Strategy to Counter Anti-Semitism.”⁸ Your keynote address claimed that DHS is committed to confronting antisemitic violence. At the same time, DHS was employing an individual who apparently champions violence against Israel and innocent Israeli civilians, while also supporting Hamas.

Following Wednesday’s media reports about Ms. Ali, according to a message from USCIS spokesperson Mr. Matthew Bourke, she was reportedly placed on “administrative leave.”⁹ The Department’s or USCIS’ sudden personnel decisions related to Ms. Ali suggest that the Department’s hiring officials were previously unaware of or ignored Ms. Ali’s background. As the agency tasked with safeguarding the American people, our values, and our homeland, the Department must ensure its employees seek to serve that mission. The Department also must hold its employees to the highest ethical standards and implement safeguards to protect against bias and conflicts of interest.

To assist the Committee with its investigation, please provide the following documents and information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 3, 2023:

1. All documents and communications, referring or relating to Ms. Nejwa Ali’s assessment of credible fear claims, asylum claims, or benefit adjudications, for which an applicant claimed to be Jewish;
2. All documents and communications, referring or relating to Ms. Nejwa Ali’s assessment of credible fear claims, asylum claims, or benefit adjudications, for which an applicant claimed to be from Palestine;
3. Any and all documents referring or relating to the October 18, 2023 placement of Ms. Nejwa Ali on administrative leave status and any other disciplinary actions;
4. All documents and communications, referring or relating to the internal review conducted to examine Ms. Nejwa Ali’s statements and actions that led to her being placed on administrative leave;

⁸ Speeches, U.S. Dep’t of H. Sec., *Secretary Mayorkas Delivers Remarks at the Foundation to Combat Anti-Semitism Sports Leaders Convening*, Oct. 12, 2023, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/10/12/secretary-mayorkas-delivers-remarks-foundation-combat-anti-semitism-sports-leaders>.

⁹ Brady Knox & Gabe Kaminsky, *Biden DHS Official Placed on Leave After Pro-Palestinian Ties Revealed*, WASH. EXAM’R, Oct. 18, 2023, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/dhs-official-leave-worked-plo>.

5. Documents sufficient to show the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's or its component agencies' determinations that Ms. Nejwa Ali's continued presence on the job poses a threat to the safety of others, the agency mission, or government property, or jeopardizes legitimate government interests;
6. Any and all documents, including but not limited to, resumes and job questionnaires, submitted for Ms. Nejwa Ali's applications for any and all positions at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or its component agencies;
7. All documents and communications, referring or relating to the review of Ms. Nejwa Ali's social media accounts while undergoing vetting for employment for any and all positions at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or its component agencies;
8. Any and all unredacted copies of Ms. Nejwa Ali's completed U.S. Office of Personnel Management Standard Form 86 (Questionnaire for National Security Positions), Standard Form 85P-S (Supplemental Questionnaire for Selected Positions), Standard Form 85P (Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions), or Standard Form 85 (Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions);
9. All unredacted copies of U.S. Office of Personnel Management Standard Forms 50 (Notification of Personnel Action) referring or relating to Ms. Nejwa Ali;
10. Any and all documents referring or relating to performance appraisals for Ms. Nejwa Ali for any and all positions at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or its component agencies;
11. Documents sufficient to identify the names and titles of employees at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or its component agencies responsible for approving Ms. Nejwa Ali for any and all positions at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or its component agencies; and
12. Documents sufficient to show the job descriptions and requirements and conditions of employment for any and all positions held by Ms. Nejwa Ali at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or its component agencies;
13. Copies of all U.S. Department of Homeland Security and USCIS policies or guidance referring or relating to screening asylum officers or adjudications officers for potential conflicts of interest; and
14. All documents and communications, including but not limited to, e-mail, text messages, Microsoft Teams Chat, sent to or from Mr. Matthew Bourke, referring or relating to Ms. Nejwa Ali from January 1, 2023, to the present.

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An attachment contains instructions for responding to this request. Please contact the Committee on Homeland Security Majority staff at (202) 226-8417 with any questions about this request.

Per Rule X of the U.S House of Representatives, the Committee on Homeland Security is the principal committee of jurisdiction for overall homeland security policy, and has special oversight functions of “all Government activities relating to homeland security, including the interaction of all departments and agencies with the Department of Homeland Security.”

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



MARK E. GREEN, MD
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security



DAN BISHOP
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight,
Investigations and Accountability



CLAY HIGGINS
Chairman
Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement



AUGUST PLUGER
Chairman
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism,
Law Enforcement, and Intelligence

Encl.

cc: The Honorable Bennie Thompson, Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Glenn Ivey, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability

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The Honorable Lou Correa, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement

The Honorable Seth Magaziner, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence