

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA, CHAIRMAN

ORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH
LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
MICHAEL S. LEE, UTAH
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
BEN SASSE, NEBRASKA
JEFF FLAKE, ARIZONA
MIKE CRAPO, IDAHO
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
JOHN KENNEDY, LOUISIANA

DIANNE FEINSTEIN, CALIFORNIA
PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT
RICHARD J. DURBIN, ILLINOIS
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
MAZIE HIRONO, HAWAII
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY
KAMALA D. HARRIS, CALIFORNIA

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

KOLAN L. DAVIS, *Chief Counsel and Staff Director*
JENNIFER DUCK, *Democratic Chief Counsel and Staff Director*

August 20, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Nielsen and Secretary Pompeo:

The Department of Justice recently announced the arrest of Iraqi national, Omar Abdulsattar Ameen, an alleged member of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and ISIS who was granted refugee status and settled in Sacramento, California.¹ According to court documents, Ameen concealed his membership in and support for Al Qaeda and ISIS in Iraq on his refugee application, and recently sought lawful permanent residence status.² Additionally, the Committee has learned that in April of 2012, Ameen applied for refugee status in Turkey, yet returned to Iraq to engage in terrorist activities while his application was pending.

Since 2004, Ameen has been a member of both AQI and ISIS.³ After Rawah, Iraq fell to the Islamic State in June 2014, Ameen allegedly joined an armed ISIS caravan that drove through the town to an Iraqi Police officer's home where Ameen shot the officer in the chest, killing him. Reportedly, the FBI corroborated Ameen's membership in and actions on behalf of AQI and ISIS due to an ongoing investigation that began in 2016.⁴ According to witnesses interviewed by the FBI, it is common knowledge in Rawah, Iraq, that Ameen was a "main local figure of AQI and ISIS."⁵ Yet, Ameen was able to conceal this information from the United States and afforded protection here as a refugee in 2014. Years later, the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force finally arrested Ameen in Sacramento, California.⁶

¹ Department of Justice Press Release (Aug. 15, 2018), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/iraqi-national-wanted-murder-iraq-arrested-california> (hereinafter Press Release)

² Press Release

³ Department of Justice Detention Memo Ameen (Aug 15, 2018), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1087556/download>, p. 11

⁴ *Id.* at 1

⁵ *Id.* at 12

⁶ Press Release

To better understand the circumstances surrounding Ameen's application for refugee status and the national security implications for allowing a member of a designated foreign terrorist organization into the country as a refugee, please provide the following information no later than September 3, 2018:

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

1. All information on Omar Abdulsattar Ameen, including: his immigration history; copies of Ameen's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) alien file (A-File); any temporary files or working files that were generated by the Department of Homeland Security, or legacy INS, whether currently in written or electronic form; and the Homeland Security Investigations Executive Summary, criminal history and immigration summaries, detainers or requests for notification, TECs hits, I-213(s), and Notice(s) to Appear; or other charging documents created to seek his removal from the United States.
2. Please provide Visa Security Unit vetting documentation related to Ameen.
3. Please provide all records of entry into or exit from any port of entry in the United States for Ameen, and a timeline of his known travel into the United States.

U.S. Department of State

1. Please provide all visa records and associated documentation for Omar Abdulsattar Ameen.
 - a. Did Ameen ever apply for any U.S. visa? If yes, at which embassy or consulate did he submit the applications?
 - b. Please provide the visa category and validity period for all previous visas issued to Ameen.
 - c. Please provide the dates of submission for all past visa applications submitted by Ameen, along with all associated documentation, case notes, or related information.
 - d. Was Ameen ever subjected to additional administrative processing associated with any visa application? Please explain and provide all documentation uncovered, or created, as a result of such additional processing.
 - e. Was Ameen ever denied a visa? If so, what was the basis for denial?

I anticipate that your written reply and any responsive documents will be unclassified. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all

unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions or instructions on unclassified information unilaterally asserted by the Executive Branch.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Aakash Singh or Katherine Nikas of my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary

cc:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary