US lawmakers demand progress on PLO lawsuit for American victims of terror

October 29, 2017

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The Jerusalem Post

<http://www.jpost.com/international/us-lawmakers-demand-progress-on-plo-lawsuit-for-american-victims-of-terror-508691>

Conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats together penned a letter last week calling on the US solicitor-general to outline administration policy on a case involving US citizens attempting to sue the PLO.

The case, Sokolow v. Palestine Liberation Organization et al., involves [American victims of attacks in Jerusalem](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/List-of-Americans-murdered-by-Palestinians-reminds-US-of-shared-struggle-496385), and survivors of American victims of attacks in the city, seeking redress from the PLO under a 1992 law that asserts the right of US citizens to sue foreign organizations over acts of terrorism.

The lawsuit was brought in 2004 with respect to six terrorist bombings in Jerusalem, committed by Palestinians in 2002-2004.

Several US courts have disagreed on the applicability of the law and its jurisdictional reach, and it is now before the Supreme Court for review.

Justices of that court have requested the Trump administration provide a brief on its position in the PLO case, and now 67 congressmen are encouraging the same. A letter written by the plaintiff’s representative, Democratic Congresswoman Kathleen Rice of New York, calls on Solicitor-General Noel Francisco to respond to the Supreme Court request with haste and in the plaintiff’s favor.

Rice’s letter earned signatures from 34 Republicans and 32 Democrats. The House of Representatives and 24 senators from both parties filed amicus briefs in favor of the plaintiff, but Rice notes that the administration has yet to weigh in.

“As members of Congress, we have a compelling interest to speak out in defense of the ATA [Anti-Terrorism Act], passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, and in support of these American victims waiting for justice,” the letter reads.

“We also seek to prevent future victims. For this reason an amicus brief supporting the grant of certiorari has already been filed by the House of Representatives. The court should grant certiorari to review the Court of Appeals [in Manhattan’s] deeply flawed and troubling decision, which concerns issues of exceptional importance to the nation.

“We ask you now to expedite the requested response of the solicitor-general and request the full and fair consideration of the views herein,” it adds.

Mark Sokolow, his wife and their daughters were wounded in a bombing in Jerusalem on January 27, 2002. In the attack, Wafa Idris became the first known female Palestinian suicide bomber, killing an 81-year-old man and wounding 150 others on Jaffa Road, including the Sokolows. The PA designated Idris a “martyr,” and pays her family monthly stipends.

Trump administration officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment on this report.