

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

On March 25, 2025, plainclothes agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) apprehended Rümeyşa Öztürk outside her home in Somerville, Massachusetts. Ms. Öztürk, a Turkish doctoral student studying at Tufts University, was informed that her student visa had been revoked; she was taken into custody and transferred to an immigration detention facility in Louisiana, where she has now been held for three weeks.¹ According to a public report, a State Department memorandum contradicts the reasons that the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have given for the revocation of her visa.² As Ms. Öztürk’s representatives in Congress, we demand that the State Department release any memoranda or other documentation in its possession that address the basis — or lack thereof — for her visa revocation and apprehension.

Despite revoking Ms. Öztürk’s visa, apprehending her on the street outside her home, taking her into custody, and imprisoning her in Louisiana, the federal government has never charged her with a crime.³ Furthermore, government records reportedly showed that Ms. Öztürk was in “good immigration standing” at the time of her arrest.⁴

Publicly, DHS has claimed that Ms. Öztürk “engaged in activities in support of Hamas,”⁵ and recommended revoking her visa under a provision of the *Immigration and Nationality Act* that permits the deportation of noncitizens who pose “potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States.”⁶ Similarly, you have suggested that Ms. Öztürk’s visa —

¹ CBS News, “Judge weighs Tufts student’s bid for release during challenge to detention,” Patrick Maguire, Melissa Quinn, Jacob Rosen, April 14, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/rumeysa-ozturk-tufts-student-ice-hearing-jurisdiction/>; USA Today, “Tufts student Rumeysa Ozturk details conditions in immigrant facility: Document,” Fernando Cervantes Jr. April 14, 2025, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/04/14/tufts-turkish-student-immigration-hijab-asthma/83088894007/>.

² Washington Post, “No evidence linking Tufts student to antisemitism or terrorism, State Dept. office found,” John Hudson, April 13, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/13/tufts-student-rumeysa-ozturk-rubio-trump/>.

³ NBC News, “Tufts student grabbed off street by ICE says hijab removed, asthma not treated at Louisiana facility,” Chloe Atkins and Minyvonne Burke, April 14, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/tufts-student-grabbed-street-ice-says-hijab-removed-asthma-not-treated-rcna201122>.

⁴ CNN, “What we know about the Tufts University PhD student detained by federal agents,” Gloria Pazmino, Andy Rose, and Yash Roy, March 28, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/27/us/rumeysa-ozturk-detained-what-we-know/index.html>; GBH, “Attorneys for Rümeyşa Öztürk and government argue before district judge,” Sarah Betancourt, April 3, 2025, <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2025-04-03/attorneys-for-rumeysa-ozturk-and-government-argue-before-district-judge>; CNN, “Tufts University student and government argue in court whether she can challenge ICE arrest,” Dalia Faheid and Andy Rose, April 14, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/14/us/rumeysa-ozturk-arrest-update-tufts-university/index.html>.

⁵ ABC News, “Tufts PhD student on visa arrested by immigration authorities, school says,” Luke Barr, March 26, 2025, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/tufts-phd-student-visa-arrested-immigration-authorities/story?id=120176245>.

alongside hundreds of others — was revoked on foreign-policy grounds because of alleged participation in activities linked to terrorism.⁷

But according to a report in the *Washington Post*, days before Ms. Öztürk’s arrest, an internal State Department memorandum concluded that the Trump administration lacked “any evidence showing that she engaged in antisemitic activities or made public statements supporting a terrorist organization.”⁸ The memorandum thus appears to contradict the federal government’s publicly stated rationale for revoking Ms. Öztürk’s visa. The memorandum has not been made available to members of Congress or the public.

Ms. Öztürk’s case demands transparency. The circumstances of her arrest and detention raise serious concerns about civil liberties, academic freedom, and free speech,⁹ as well as the Trump administration’s truthfulness. Congress, universities, legal experts, and other members of the public have a strong and compelling interest in the matter.

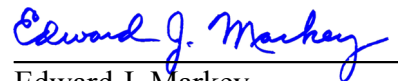
Accordingly, by April 30, 2025, please provide us with a copy of the memorandum referenced in the *Washington Post* report and any other documentation in the State Department’s possession regarding the basis for Ms. Öztürk’s visa revocation and how she was identified for this action.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

⁶ 8 USC § 1182; *Washington Post*, “No evidence linking Tufts student to antisemitism or terrorism, State Dept. office found,” John Hudson, April 13, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/13/tufts-student-rumeysa-ozturk-rubio-trump/>.

⁷ WBUR, “Why was Tufts student Rumeysa Ozturk detained by ICE? Here's what we know,” Nik DeCosta-Klipa, March 28, 2025, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/03/28/rumeysa-ozturk-marco-rubio-ice-detainment-israel-hamas-tufts-newsletter>; CNN, “What we know about the Tufts University PhD student detained by federal agents,” Gloria Pazmino, Andy Rose and Yash Roy, March 28, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/27/us/rumeysa-ozturk-detained-what-we-know/index.html>.

⁸ *Washington Post*, “No evidence linking Tufts student to antisemitism or terrorism, State Dept. office found,” John Hudson, April 13, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/13/tufts-student-rumeysa-ozturk-rubio-trump/>.

⁹ Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren to DHS, ICE, and the Department of State, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/final_-_warren_lawmakers_letter_to_ice_re_rumeysa_ozturk.pdf.