

# Co-director of award-winning *No Other Land* attacked by Israeli fascist settlers and military

David Walsh  
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According to multiple news reports, Hamdan Ballal, one of the four directors of *No Other Land*, the winner of the best documentary feature at the recent Academy Awards, was beaten by a mob of Israeli settlers on Monday and detained by the military. His whereabouts are unknown.

Only three weeks ago, Ballal, along with fellow directors Basel Adra, Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, was on the stage at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles to accept an Oscar. Now Zionist fascists and soldiers threaten his life.

*The Guardian* published an extensive report on the vicious attack, based on the eyewitness accounts of five Jewish-American activists from the Center for Jewish Nonviolence.

The activists asserted that Ballal

was surrounded and attacked by a group of about 15 armed settlers in Susya in the Masafer Yatta area south of Hebron.

Joseph, who asked not to use his full name for security reasons, said:

They started throwing stones towards Palestinians and destroyed a water tank near Hamdan's house.

The witnesses said that a group of soldiers arrived at the scene alongside other settlers dressed in military uniform who chased Hamdan to his house and handed him over to the military. "The settlers destroyed his car with stones and slashed one of the tyres," another witness, Raviv, told *The Guardian*. "All the windows and windshields were broken."

Basel Adra, who addressed the audience on March 2 while accepting the Academy Award, witnessed the attack and

described it as "horrific."

There were dozens of settlers together with the Israeli soldiers, and they were threatening us with weapons. ... The police were there from the beginning and did not intervene. While the soldiers were pointing their weapons at us, the settlers started attacking the houses of the Palestinians.

Hamdan tried to protect his family, and the settlers attacked him. Soldiers started shooting in the air to prevent anyone to help Hamdan. He was shouting for help. They let the settlers attack him and then the army abducted him.

*No Other Land's* Israeli co-director Yuval Abraham, who also spoke at the awards ceremony in early March, posted on X:

A group of settlers just lynched Hamdan Ballal, co-director of our film no other land. They beat him and he has injuries in his head and stomach, bleeding. Soldiers invaded the ambulance he called, and took him. No sign of him since.

Settlers have been attacking Palestinians in the area on an almost daily basis, with the complicity and collaboration of the police and military. Adra suggested that he thought the intensifying violence might be a response to the international success of *No Other Land*. Adra said:

The settlers' violence is increasing here. Maybe it's a revenge for the movie and the Oscar.

On X, Adra explained on Monday:

I'm standing with Karam, Hamdan's 7 year old son, near the blood of Hamdan's in his house, after settlers lynched him. Hamdan, co-director of our film *No Other Land*, is still missing after soldiers abducted him, injured and bleeding. This is how they erase Masafer Yatta.

Earlier in the day, Adra described how "armed and masked settlers" were "leading a terror attack on Masafer Yatta" as he was writing.

Dozens of settlers arrived at my friend Naser's house in Susya, throwing stones at his home, smashing his vehicle, and slashing [the vehicle's tires with knives].

We risked our lives to film. ... Soldiers are ordering us to stay inside our homes in the village, while those who attack and could've slaughtered the residents in their homes roam freely, masked, around the village.

The situation is without precedent. *No Other Land*, which recounts the criminality of Zionist "ethnic cleansing" operations in the West Bank aimed at terrorizing or driving out the local Palestinian population, has won dozens of awards and prizes at dozens of film festivals and other events throughout the world. No one has challenged the truth of its content. But the Israeli regime and its agencies are moving toward murdering the filmmakers.

As we noted in our original review, the film

recounts the brutal expulsion of Palestinian villagers from Masafer Yatta, a settlement of 19 villages south of Hebron in the West Bank.

The filmmakers, as we explained,

are compelled to protect themselves from the aggressive actions of the Israeli army and the fascistic settler militias allied with it. Friends and relatives help repeatedly to hide them and their footage. Anyone opposing the evictions is mercilessly attacked.

Encouraged by the Trump administration, the fascist elements are stepping up their attacks.

*No Other Land* was the first film in history to win Best Documentary Feature Film at the Academy Awards without a distribution company attached to it in the US. This is the result of the pro-Zionist propaganda machine that works to suppress the truth and intimidate critics. The filmmakers have proceeded in partnership with Cinetic Media to organize bookings so far at 140 independent theaters in the US, and the film has taken in more \$1.7 million at the box office.

The blatant attack on free speech mounted by the mayor of Miami Beach, Steven Meiner, who threatened a local theater that screened *No Other Land*, collapsed March 19, after a massive public outcry. Meiner had proposed to cancel the lease of the O Cinema, a nonprofit theater that operates out of a city-owned building in the South Beach neighborhood of Miami Beach.

The *Miami Herald* reports:

At a raucous Miami Beach City Commission meeting where the vast majority of attendees opposed Meiner's proposal, Meiner said he was withdrawing the item and deferring an alternative proposal to encourage the theater to show films that "highlight a fair and balanced viewpoint."



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