

# Newlywed Palestinian woman faces deportation by Trump's fascistic immigration regime

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Ward Sakeik, a 22-year-old Palestinian woman who is not a citizen of any country, is being victimized by the fascist immigration policies of the Trump administration. Detained by US authorities while returning from her honeymoon in February, Sakeik now faces indefinite incarceration and the threat of deportation to a third country where she has never lived and cannot claim citizenship.

Her case has sparked outrage among immigrant rights advocates and exposes the brutal reality of Trump's ongoing assault on immigrants, refugees, and legal residents.

Ward Sakeik is currently being held at Prairieland Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has attempted to deport her to Israel, despite her never having lived there and having no legal status in any country.

According to her husband, Taahir Shaikh, Sakeik was recently taken to Fort Worth Alliance Airport and told she would be sent to the Israeli border. The deportation was abruptly halted after Israel launched airstrikes on Iran, and she was returned to detention without any clear explanation or written notification of her destination.

As her husband told ABC News:

She's in a procedural black hole because she's not even eligible for a bond. They're saying, "When you were eight years old, you already were given your due process in court." She doesn't even remember what a courtroom looks like.

The impact on the lives of the newlywed couple has been devastating. Shaikh, a US citizen, described his wife's family as "fearful beyond imagination." He emphasized that Sakeik's detention has left them in a state of constant anxiety, with no clarity about her fate or the legal process governing her case.

Ward Sakeik was born in Saudi Arabia to Palestinian parents from Gaza. Saudi Arabia does not grant citizenship to children born on its soil unless their parents are Saudi citizens, leaving Sakeik stateless from birth. Her family, originally from the Gaza Strip, never secured legal status for her in Palestine. She has never set foot in Gaza.

At the age of eight, Sakeik and her family entered the US on a tourist visa and applied for asylum. Their claim was denied, and Sakeik was placed under a final removal order in 2011. However, due to her statelessness, she was not deported but allowed to remain in the US under an "order of supervision," which required her to check in regularly with immigration authorities and granted her work

authorization.

Sakeik grew up in Texas, attended the University of Texas at Arlington, and became a wedding photographer. She has lived in the US for 14 years, fully complying with all immigration protocols and check-ins.

Her family and advocates have spoken out forcefully against the treatment Sakeik has received. Her attorney, Waled Elsaban, emphasized the injustice:

Ward does not have citizenship in any country. She has never been to Gaza, and she cannot obtain citizenship there. She is being punished for something entirely outside her control.

Advocates are demanding her immediate release, arguing that her detention serves no purpose other than cruelty and is a violation of basic human rights.

Sakeik's nightmare began in February 2025, when she and her husband traveled to St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands for their honeymoon. They believed the trip would be safe, as St. Thomas is a US territory and Sakeik had a pending green card application. Upon their return, however, US Customs and Border Protection flagged her at the airport, citing her final removal order from 2011.

Despite her compliance with all immigration requirements and her marriage to a US citizen, Sakeik was immediately detained and transferred between several ICE facilities. She has now spent over 120 days in detention, with her green card process stalled and her future entirely uncertain.

Her husband Shaikh said:

We thought we were safe traveling within U.S. territory. She had all her paperwork, her green card application was pending, and she had another appointment scheduled for July. But they just took her away.

The cruelty of her treatment was compounded when, in mid-June, ICE attempted to deport her without informing her or her attorney of the destination. Sakeik was told only that she was being taken to the Israeli border.

The US attack on the rights of Ward Sakeik, while unusual due to her lack of citizenship anywhere, is not entirely unique. While Trump campaigned on promises to deport “the worst of the worst,” data shows a dramatic shift toward the arrest and deportation of individuals with no criminal history.

Over the first five months of the administration, 44 percent of those arrested by ICE had a criminal conviction, but since late May, that figure has dropped to just 30 percent, with 44 percent of those arrested having no criminal record at all.

As ABC News reported:

In recent weeks, the Trump administration has arrested an increasing number of migrants with no criminal convictions. The numbers ... give the first real glimpse of how Trump’s immigration enforcement policy is playing out in the streets.

Sakeik’s ordeal is part of this shift. She has no criminal record, is married to a US citizen and has spent nearly her entire life in the US. Yet she is treated as a criminal and subjected to indefinite detention and the threat of deportation to a country where she would be stateless and her life in danger.

The administration’s policies have also targeted legal permanent residents and naturalized US citizens, with mass raids, family separations and the weaponization of bureaucratic technicalities to justify expulsions.

In response to Sakeik’s plight, a growing campaign has emerged demanding her release and an end to the inhumane treatment of individuals in a similar situation. Protests have been held from San Pedro, California, to New York, with demonstrators denouncing ICE raids and the broader assault on immigrant communities.

A Change.org petition has been launched to demand that Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett speak out against Sakeik’s illegal detention and threatened deportation. The petition calls for immediate intervention to halt her removal and secure her release, emphasizing the broader implications for all stateless and vulnerable immigrants in the US.

The petition states:

We demand justice for Ward Sakeik and all those trapped in legal limbo by a broken, racist immigration system. Congresswoman Crockett must use her office to stop this outrage and defend the rights of the stateless.

So far, all that Democrat Crockett has been able to muster is a weak statement saying her office “is fully aware of the situation involving Mrs. Ward Sakeik and her current detainment at the Prairieland Detention Center.” Crockett claimed she has been in contact with Sakeik’s family and continues to “engage with the appropriate federal agencies as we work toward a just and humane resolution.” Crockett has not issued a demand for her immediate release.

The campaign has drawn support from immigrant rights organizations, legal advocacy groups and ordinary citizens appalled by the cruelty of Sakeik’s treatment. The campaign has focused on Sakeik’s case as a test by the Trump White House of its ability to attack fundamental rights such as due process.

The detention and threatened deportation of Sakeik is part of the escalating campaign of repression targeting immigrants, refugees, and political activists under the Trump administration’s authoritarian attacks on democratic government, which has received critical backing by decisions from the fascist majority on the US Supreme Court.

The cases of Mahmoud Khalil and Kilmar Abrego Garcia have exposed the systematic use of immigration law as a weapon to punish dissent, undermine due process, and terrorize immigrant communities.

Like Sakeik, Mahmoud Khalil was detained and threatened with deportation on pretextual, retaliatory grounds. Khalil, a prominent advocate for Palestinian rights, was held for months in a remote ICE facility in Louisiana. The government’s shifting justifications for his detention—including baseless allegations related to his green card application—were transparently designed to punish him for his political speech and activism.

Despite a federal court order for his release, the government delayed and concocted new allegations, a “classic move from the government’s playbook: make false claims and delay, delay, delay,” as Amy Belsher of the NYCLU put it.

These tactics mirror the “procedural black hole” faced by Sakeik, who, like Khalil, has been denied basic due process and held on the thinnest of legal pretexts.

The ongoing campaign against Kilmar Abrego Garcia also exposes the lawlessness of Trump’s immigration enforcement. Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran construction worker residing in Maryland, was mistakenly deported to El Salvador in March, despite a court order barring his removal due to the threat of persecution.

Only after a Supreme Court directive and mounting public outrage did the Trump administration facilitate his return to the US, not to restore his freedom, but to face criminal charges of human smuggling, which his lawyers have called “absurd.”

Abrego Garcia’s attorneys have warned that even now after his return to the US, there is no guarantee he will not be deported again. They cite “inconsistent statements” from the Trump administration and a complete lack of trust in the Justice Department’s assurances. The judge in his case has postponed his release from custody, fearing the administration will again flout the law and deport him before he can exercise his rights.

In the case of Ward Sakeik, the additional element of her Palestinian ancestry is being deliberately utilized as part of a smear against her with the implication that those with family connections to Gaza are somehow “antisemitic” and a threat to US foreign policy.

This erosion of due process—the government’s willingness to ignore court orders, fabricate charges and detain individuals indefinitely—directly parallels the ordeal faced by Abrego Garcia, Sakeik and Khalil. All three have been subjected to indefinite detention, legal limbo and the constant threat of deportation, regardless of their legal status, family ties, or the risks they face if removed.



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