

# 20-year-old Palestinian American beaten to death by Zionist mob in the West Bank

**Kevin Reed**  
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On July 11, Sayfollah “Saif” Musallet, a 20-year-old US citizen from Tampa, Florida, was beaten to death by Israeli settlers in the West Bank village of Sinjil, north of Ramallah.

Musallet had traveled there on June 4 to visit family and help defend their farmland, which had been threatened by settler encroachment. On the day of the incident, after Friday prayers, Musallet joined relatives and villagers heading to their fields amid heightened tensions and a recent escalation in settler attacks.

As the group approached their property, a mob of armed settlers, wielding rocks, bats, sticks and at least two rifles, attacked. Musallet and another young man, Mohammed al-Shalabi, attempted to defend their families’ land. Al-Shalabi was shot and killed, while Musallet was set upon with bats and sticks by the mob.

Ambulances were called immediately, but Israeli settlers blocked their advance for more than three hours. The windshield of an ambulance was smashed by stone-throwing, and Israeli soldiers fired tear gas at Palestinians while reportedly refusing medics access to the scene.

Only after the mob retreated did Musallet’s younger brother reach him and bring him to a waiting ambulance, but the young man succumbed to his injuries before arriving at the hospital.

Musallet’s father, Kamel, condemned both the settler violence and the actions of the Israeli military, insisting that they, alongside the US government, share responsibility for enabling impunity.

He said, “The Israeli military prevented the ambulance and allowed the settlers to do what they do anytime they want. I hold the Israeli military just as responsible as the settlers and the American government for not doing anything about this.”

Musallet’s cousin Diana, delivering the family’s official remarks, said, “We are devastated that our beloved Sayfollah, nicknamed Saif, was brutally beaten to death in our family’s land by illegal Israeli settlers, who were attempting to steal it. Israeli settlers surrounded Saif for over three hours as paramedics attempted to reach him, but the mob blocked the ambulance. ... No family should ever have to face this injustice.”

Eyewitnesses reported that some of the settlers wore army-style clothes and carried firearms and that Israeli soldiers present at the time failed to stop the attack or protect the Palestinians.

The family has demanded that the US government conduct a full investigation and hold those responsible for Musallet’s murder accountable. The family statement said, “This murder is merely the latest incident involving the killing of an American citizen by

Israeli settlers or soldiers.

“Every previous killing of an American citizen has gone unpunished by the American government, which is why the Israeli government continues its unchecked violence against American Palestinians and, of course, other Palestinians.”

Sayfollah Kamel Musallet was born in Port Charlotte, Florida, and raised in Tampa. A dual citizen, Musallet was deeply connected to both his Palestinian roots and his American community. He worked with his father at their dessert and ice cream shop in Tampa and was known for his kindness and sense of responsibility toward family and friends.

He regularly visited the West Bank to maintain ties with extended family and the ancestral land. According to relatives, he was looking forward to his 21st birthday and had spoken about building a future in Palestine with his family and possibly starting one of his own.

The Israeli government’s response has been limited to stating that an incident occurred between “Israeli civilians and Palestinians” near Sinjil and that an investigation was underway without mentioning the names of the victims. Official announcements referenced possible rock-throwing by Palestinians and fell short of specifically condemning settler violence or announcing arrests in Musallet’s case.

Palestinian rights groups highlight that over 93 percent of settler violence investigations are closed without indictment, perpetuating a climate of impunity. While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke and condemned some recent attacks by settlers, Musallet’s killing was not directly addressed.

Facing pressure from the family and Palestinian advocacy organizations, US government officials have been forced to address the killing of an American by Zionist thugs. However, U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee issued a toothless statement on Twitter/X on Monday in which he misspelled the young man’s name and said he “asked” Israel to investigate the murder.

Members of Congress, such as Representatives Hakeem Jeffries and Rosa DeLauro, have called for an investigation, but there is no indication the US will conduct an independent inquiry or even do anything. To date, no suspects have been arrested or charged.

At a press conference at the White House on Wednesday, when a reporter asked the president if the US would pursue the prosecution of Musallet’s killers, Trump cut him off with a series of non sequiturs and then claimed, “We protect all American citizens anywhere in the world, especially if they’re unjustly

murdered or killed. So, we're gathering more information, but I hope you saw yesterday Ambassador Huckabee in Israel asked the Israeli authorities to produce an investigation."

Musallet was at least the seventh US citizen killed by Israeli security forces or settlers in the West Bank since October 7, 2023, and the fifth since the intensification of violence against Palestinians in the Gaza genocide. No one has been prosecuted for these killings, exposing that American citizens of Palestinian descent that are killed in the region rarely get justice.

Musallet's death takes place within the context of increasing violence by Israeli settlers and the military against Palestinians in the West Bank. Over 961 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since October 2023, the majority during raids, forced displacement and direct armed assaults.

Settler attacks increased by 30 percent during the first half of 2025 compared to the previous year, with at least 414 violent incidents reported in six months. UN data shows these attacks, often with protection from Israeli military forces, have forced nearly 2,900 Palestinians from their homes since January 2023, while only 3 percent of legal complaints against settlers end in conviction.

Over the decades, settler violence has followed a pattern: attacks on Palestinian farmers and shepherds, destruction and theft of land and property, coordinated village raids, and systematic harassment designed to drive Palestinians out of their land and consolidate Zionist control over the occupied territory.

"Hilltop youth" and fascist settler militias, espousing racist and ultranationalist ideologies, have escalated their operations with minimal if any opposition from authorities. The Israeli state's refusal to investigate or prosecute these crimes has fostered an environment where violent settler tactics—ranging from assaults to firebombings and property destruction—are carried out with the endorsement of the Zionist regime.

The rise of fascist settler groups—a phenomenon dating back to the 1970s but vastly accelerated over the last two decades—marks a deliberate strategy to alter facts on the ground. Led and organized by radical Zionist religious-nationalist networks, these groups operate with a clear mandate: to terrorize Palestinian communities, break their will to remain and open up the land for future Israeli annexation.

These methods have now been adopted writ large in Gaza with a US-Israeli program of mass ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the enclave on the Mediterranean through forced relocation into a concentration camp at the border with Egypt, using the Orwellian name of a "humanitarian city." The Zionist plot of Netanyahu—with the full backing of the Trump administration in Washington D.C.—is the forced removal of 2 million Palestinians into the camp in advance of their permanent expulsion from Gaza through the Rafah crossing.

Even when officials issue condemnations of violence in the West Bank, prosecutions are exceedingly rare. This fact has made Palestinian civilians and their families perpetual targets with no recourse. The words of Musallet's loved ones calling for justice—not only for Saif but for countless Palestinians and American citizens who have lost their lives to violent settler expansion—are directed at defending fundamental rights to land

and life itself being denied in the occupied territories.

As news spread of Musallet's brutal killing, Palestinian American communities in the US held vigils and protests, demanding justice for Saif and for all victims of settler violence. Statements of solidarity came from organizations across the country, denouncing the ongoing US funding of Israeli military operations and the billions in annual military aid enabling occupation and settlements in the West Bank.

Multiple rights groups called for Washington to place actual conditions on aid, warning that diplomatic statements alone have changed nothing in decades. At Musallet's Tampa mosque, hundreds gathered to honor his memory, reflecting on his commitment to both his family and his heritage.

Friends who spoke at the memorial remembered Sayfollah as "deeply devoted to those he loved" and "a bridge between two cultures." They expressed anger at the reality faced by Palestinian Americans, who can travel to their ancestral lands only under the threat of violence.

A classmate from high school said, "We always joked about one day visiting his family's land. None of us ever thought it would end up like this. It feels like nothing—not his citizenship, not our government—can protect us once you're over there."

Prominent Palestinian rights groups criticized the pattern of murder of American citizens in the occupied territories, highlighting prior cases such as Shireen Abu Akleh, Omar Assad and Rachel Corrie, who were all killed or fatally injured by Israeli forces or settlers over the past two decades. None of the perpetrators faced meaningful prosecution.

Since the outbreak of the war on Gaza, the West Bank has witnessed what multiple human rights monitors describe as "an unprecedented campaign of terror" by both settlers and Israeli state forces. Thousands of Palestinians have been driven from their ancestral villages by coordinated attacks involving arson, shootings and mass raids, while settlement expansion on stolen land continues daily.



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