Zionist assassination plot against Nerdeen Kiswani is a warning to the working class

Jacob Crosse
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The assassination plot against Palestinian-American activist Nerdeen Kiswani is a warning to the entire working class. Last week, the FBI and New York Police Department revealed that Alexander Heifler, a 26-year-old from Hoboken, New Jersey, planned to firebomb Kiswani's home with the aim of killing her.

Heifler is affiliated with the JDL 613 Brotherhood, a Zionist organization founded in 2024 that draws its inspiration from the fascistic Jewish Defense League.

Revealed in the plot is not simply the criminal conspiracy of one individual. It is the product of a definite political environment, cultivated from above by the ruling class, in which far-right Zionist organizations, sections of the state and both capitalist parties have worked to criminalize opposition to genocide, equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism and incite violence against those who speak out and organize in defense of the Palestinian people.

Kiswani is a US citizen who has lived virtually her entire life in the United States. She is the founder of Within Our Lifetime, a New York-based organization that has played a leading role in organizing protests against the genocide in Gaza and against the Democratic and Republican politicians who support it. Speaking to the *World Socialist Web Site* after Monday's press conference, Kiswani said the attack was aimed at silencing broader opposition to war and repression. "I think they're trying to suppress anti-genocide, anti-war, pro-Palestinian, pro-freedom advocates," she said.

The plot followed months of threats, stalking, doxxing and incitement directed at Kiswani by Zionist organizations. As Eric Lee, one of Kiswani's attorneys, explained at the press conference, the attack was "the deliberate and intended product of a political strategy by the Trump administration to cultivate extra-legal paramilitary militia forces to murder its opponents and suppress dissent in the aim of establishing a dictatorship in this country."

The would-be assassin was not acting impulsively. There was coordinated preparation, including group chats, a safe house and access to financial resources. The attack on Kiswani also follows years of harassment by the fascist and Zionist right. On January 1, 2026, the official JDL 613 X account issued an explicit death threat against Kiswani and her infant: "you and your baby are disgusting and vile scum neither of you should exist in the usa… we will meet one day nerdeen we are watching everyone."

Betar, the Zionist organization now being sued by Kiswani for its campaign of threats and harassment, has publicly smeared her as a terrorist, agitated for her repression, and sought direct collaboration with the state in stripping her of her rights. At Monday's press conference, Kiswani's attorney revealed that Betar had urged the Trump administration to revoke Kiswani's citizenship and confirmed that it had met with the administration in Washington to discuss her case.

In February, Kiswani filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against Betar and associated individuals under the Ku Klux Klan Enforcement Act of 1871. The complaint invokes the statute's private right of action against non-state actors when "two or more persons… conspire… for the purpose of depriving, either directly or indirectly, any person or class of persons of the equal protection of the laws, or of equal privileges and immunities under the laws." The significance of the suit is not only that it seeks relief for a campaign of threats and intimidation, but that it identifies this campaign for what it is: an organized attempt to terrorize political opponents and deprive them of basic rights.

The Ku Klux Klan Act was one of three Enforcement Acts passed by Congress between 1870 and 1871 to uphold the democratic and equal-protection guarantees embodied in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments adopted after the Civil War. These measures were a response to vigilante violence by the KKK and other extra-legal terror organizations aimed at violently violating the rights of newly emancipated black Americans.

The actions of the KKK were connected to the utilization of vigilante violence in the United States to counter the emergence of working class struggle—from company gunmen and deputized "posses" to private detective armies such as the Pinkertons and strikebreaking mobs. That such methods are now being deployed against opponents of genocide and imperialist war underscores the depth of the crisis of the American ruling class and its accelerating break with democratic norms.

Under conditions in which the Trump administration is deeply unpopular and its wars are widely opposed, the ruling class is increasingly relying on extra-state and paramilitary violence to terrify the population into submission. From the Oath Keepers, Proud Boys and III Percenters (in which actual antisemitism is rife) mobilized around the January 6 coup attempt, to masked immigration Gestapo deployed in American cities and airports, to Zionist thugs targeting anti-genocide activists, the state is cultivating violent and fascistic auxiliaries to maintain capitalist rule.

The plot against Kiswani occurs within the context of

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increasingly violent and openly fascistic rhetoric from the highest levels of the state and the Republican Party over the preceding months.

Florida Representative Randy Fine, who has advocated dropping nuclear weapons on Gaza, declared that if he had to choose "between dogs and Muslims" it "would not be a difficult choice." Alabama Senator Tommy Tuberville referred to Muslims as the "enemy… inside the gates" and called for a ban on all "ISLAM immigrants." Representative Mary Miller demanded, "Deport them all. Now." Earlier this month, Representative Andy Ogles declared that "Muslims don't belong in American society" and that "Pluralism is a lie."

The targeting of pro-Palestinian protesters represents the importation into the United States of methods long employed by the Israeli state. The JDL 613 Brotherhood is a newer Zionist formation in the political lineage of the Jewish Defense League. Its founder, Yisrael Yaacob Ben Avraham, has publicly glorified Meir Kahane, the fascist founder of the JDL. Organizations such as Betar and JDL 613 openly draw on this reactionary tradition, which has always combined militant nationalism with the advocacy of political violence.

More fundamentally, the attempt on Kiswani's life arises out of the turn toward dictatorship within the United States and the deliberate effort of the Trump administration to criminalize opposition and encourage political violence. In a March 22 post on social media, Trump issued a thinly veiled threat, declaring: "Now with the death of Iran, the greatest enemy America has is the Radical Left, Highly Incompetent, Democrat Party!"

This is the language of a regime preparing to treat political dissent as an enemy to be crushed. The deployment of paramilitary ICE forces into American cities and airports, the drive to abolish birthright citizenship and other basic democratic rights are components of a systematic conspiracy to establish a presidential dictatorship.

Today the target is a Palestinian-American opponent of genocide. Tomorrow it is workers on strike, students protesting war, immigrants resisting deportation, journalists exposing state crimes or anyone else who comes into conflict with the drive toward dictatorship and war.

Already, students and workers, including Momodou Taal, Mahmoud Khalil, Rümeysa Öztürk and Yaa'kub Ira Vijandre, have been targeted for detention or deportation because they opposed genocide and exercised their right to free speech. Vijandre, a DACA recipient, was seized by ICE after speaking publicly in defense of another immigrant targeted by the state, underscoring that the issue is not immigration status as such, but the criminalization of political opposition itself.

The attack on Kiswani was fostered not only by the Republicans, but by the Democratic Party as well. The political groundwork for the criminalization of opposition to Zionism and the genocide in Gaza was laid under the Biden administration. Mass student protests were met with coordinated police repression, mass arrests, suspensions, expulsions and an incessant campaign of slander equating opposition to Zionism with antisemitism—aimed at isolating protesters and legitimizing state violence against them.

The Democratic Party is absolutely opposed to the development of a movement from below against Trump's dictatorship. As Trump wages war on the Constitution, the Democrats do nothing. They have repeatedly funded the government, voted for massive military and security budgets, and confined all "opposition" to procedural complaints and empty rhetoric. In practice, they function as accomplices: working to suppress mass resistance, channel opposition back into electoral dead ends and ensure that the attacks on democratic rights proceed uninterrupted.

The vast majority of the population opposes this. That opposition was visible again at the press conference defending Kiswani, where Muslims and Jews stood together, united in opposition to Zionist terror and in defense of democratic rights. It has also been visible in the immense protests that filled cities across the United States in the "No Kings" demonstrations last weekend.

The defense of Nerdeen Kiswani cannot be entrusted to the Democratic Party, which has enabled and legitimized the criminalization of anti-war opposition, or to the courts alone. Legal exposure of the conspiracy is necessary, but the essential question is political.

The fight against dictatorship and fascist violence must be rooted in the working class, the great social force that produces all the wealth and has no interest in war, chauvinism or repression. Workers of every religion, nationality and ethnicity must unite in defense of Palestinians, immigrants, democratic rights and all those targeted by the state and its fascistic auxiliaries.

The campaign to defend Kiswani is inseparable from the struggle against genocide, imperialist war and the capitalist system that gives rise to both. The democratic rights of all can be defended only through the independent mobilization of the working class, in the United States and internationally, on the basis of a socialist program directed against war, fascism and capitalism.

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