

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.  
All praise and thanks belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds.  
May peace and prayers be upon Prophet Muhammad and his family.



Council on American-Islamic Relations  
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February 20, 2026

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

The Honorable Pam Bondi  
Attorney General of the United States  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington,  
DC 20530

CC: The Honorable Harmeet Dhillon  
Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice

RE: Urgent Request for DOJ & State Department to Investigate Murder of 19-Year-Old  
Nasrallah Abu Siyam by Israeli Settlers

Dear Secretary Rubio and Attorney General Bondi:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, we write to request that your offices investigate and hold accountable the illegal Israeli settlers responsible for the killing of 19-year-old American citizen Nasrallah Muhammad Jamal Abu Siyam.

Nasrallah was reportedly shot and killed by a group of Israeli settlers on Wednesday near a village east of Ramallah. According to reports, the settlers were attacking farmland and attempting to steal livestock when Nasrallah and others approached to demand that they leave. As Israeli forces (IDF) arrived, the settlers reportedly became emboldened and opened fire, killing Nasrallah and injuring four others.

So far, we have only heard a State Department spokesperson say, according to the Associated Press, that they "condemn this violence," and, according to Reuters, that "the U.S. Department of State has no higher priority than the safety and security of U.S. citizens overseas." While we appreciate this initial response, it is not sufficient. The United States must use its full authority and its close relationship with Israel to conduct an independent U.S. investigation into this killing, particularly given the Israeli government's well-documented pattern of distorting facts,

fabricating narratives, and ultimately exonerating itself, its soldiers, and illegal settlers, even in cases involving the killing of American Palestinian Muslim and Christian citizens.

In a similar case last September, CAIR and CAIR-Chicago called on your offices to investigate and hold accountable the illegal Israeli settlers responsible for murdering U.S. citizen Khamis Ayyad, a Cicero, Illinois resident and father of five.

This killing was not only a brutal murder but, in the legal sense, an act of terrorism carried out by illegal settlers who have for years terrorized Palestinian communities, including American citizens, with impunity. These violent, politically motivated attacks, often enabled by the Israeli government and military, are part of a broader effort to forcibly seize Palestinian land. The United States has both the legal authority and treaty mechanisms to investigate this crime.

Under both the Biden and Trump administrations, CAIR has called on the Department of Justice investigate the killing of U.S. citizens by Israeli forces and settlers.

On April 15, 2025, the Civil Rights Division asserted that the Justice Department lacked jurisdiction to investigate crimes committed entirely overseas, even when the victims are American citizens. CAIR strongly disagrees and maintains that the Department possesses both the legal authority and the moral obligation to act.

Specifically:

- 18 U.S.C. § 2332(a) establishes jurisdiction over the murder of U.S. nationals outside the United States;
- 18 U.S.C. § 2332(b) provides authority to prosecute conspiracies and violent acts against U.S. citizens abroad involving foreign actors;
- The U.S.–Israel Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) obligates both nations to cooperate in criminal investigations, including murder cases, and does not exempt crimes committed by settlers, soldiers, or dual nationals.

The Department of Justice has relied on some of these statutes to investigate the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack that killed dual American-Israeli citizens. Failing to apply these statutes when the perpetrators attacking Americans are Israeli settlers would constitute an indefensible double standard. American citizens must be protected, regardless of the citizenship of the perpetrator.

Following the July 2025 killing of 20-year-old U.S. citizen and Florida resident Sayfollah (“Saif”) Musallet by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, a U.S. ambassador stated that “there must be accountability for this criminal and terrorist act.” That standard must apply equally here.

We therefore urge your offices to:

1. Launch a full investigation into the killing of Nasrallah Muhammad Jamal Abu Siyam and other U.S. citizens harmed by Israeli actors;
2. Formally invoke the U.S.–Israel MLAT to obtain evidence, compel cooperation, and pursue accountability;
3. Publicly affirm that American law protects all citizens equally and that no government or group has impunity to kill Americans abroad.

The U.S. government has failed time and again to act in numerous similar cases involving U.S. citizens killed by Israeli forces or settlers. Additional American victims of Israeli government and illegal settler violence include:

- Shireen Abu Akleh, an American journalist shot while clearly identified as press;
- Sayfollah Musallet, an American beaten to death by Israeli settlers in Sinjil;
- Khamis al-Ayyad, American killed by smoke inhalation after a settler attack that set homes and vehicles ablaze;
- Omar Mohammad Rabea, a 14-year-old American reportedly shot by an Israeli soldier and denied timely medical treatment;
- Omar Assad, an 80-year-old American who died after being bound and abandoned by Israeli soldiers;
- Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old American human rights defender killed by an Israeli military bulldozer;
- Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, a American activist shot during a protest;
- Tawfiq Ajaq, a 17-year-old American fatally shot by an off-duty Israeli police officer;
- Mohammad Khmour, another American killed under similar circumstances;
- Jacob Flickinger, an American aid worker with World Central Kitchen killed in a 2024 airstrike in Gaza.

The murder of American citizen Nasrallah Abu Siyam must mark a turning point. The time to act is now. Continued inaction risks signaling that Americans can be killed abroad without consequence when the perpetrators are politically protected.

We are prepared to assist in any way. Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert S. McCaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R" and "M".

Robert S. McCaw

CAIR Director of Government Affairs Department