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US Citizen Reportedly Killed in West Bank Settler Attack

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On Friday, the U.S. State Department confirmed it is aware of reports regarding the death of a U.S. citizen in the Israeli-occupied West Bank after a settler assault on a Palestinian American in Sinjil. The incident, which has sparked outrage, underscores the escalating tensions in the region.

According to WAFA and the Palestinian Health Ministry, 20—year—old U.S. citizen Sayafollah Kamel Musallet of Tampa, Florida, was beaten to death during an attack by Israeli settlers in

Sinjil, north of Ramallah. A second Palestinian, 23—year—old Hussein Al—Shalabi, was also killed during the same incident, though WAFA has not released a full list of wounded victims.

Musallet's family, speaking to The Washington Post, said he was beaten to death by settlers and died before medical aid could reach him due to roadblocks. The State Department said it was aware of the incident but declined further comment "out of respect for the privacy of the family."

The Israeli military acknowledged the incident in Sinjil, claiming it is under investigation. It stated that clashes erupted after Palestinians allegedly threw rocks at Israelis, resulting in minor injuries. Israeli forces were deployed to the scene, reportedly using non-lethal measures to disperse the crowd.

Violence involving settlers in the West Bank has surged since Israel's military campaign against Hamas in Gaza began in late 2023, according to regional rights groups. This period has also seen a rise in Palestinian attacks on Israelis, with dozens of fatalities reported in recent years. The Israeli military has intensified its operations across the West Bank, further inflaming the situation.

The deaths of US citizens in the region have drawn particular attention. Notable cases include Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, teenager Omar Mohammad Rabea, and Turkish American activist Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, all killed in recent years. These incidents have fuelled criticism of Israel's actions in the occupied territories.

Last year, the UN's highest court declared Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, including the West Bank, and its settlements there illegal, urging their withdrawal. Israel, however, maintains its claim to the land, citing historical and biblical ties, following its capture during the 1967 war. The West Bank remains a focal point for Palestinians seeking statehood.

The reported killing of Musallat adds to the growing list of concerns over settler violence and the broader conflict in the region. As investigations continue, the incident is likely to further strain relations and intensify calls for accountability.

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