

Six-year-old Palestinian-American boy stabbed to death in hate crime in Chicago

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Chicago, October 16 (RHC)-- In the U.S. city of Chicago, a 71-year-old white man motivated by anti-Palestinian rhetoric has stabbed a 6-year-old Muslim boy 26 times and seriously injured his mother.

The incident happened on Sunday amid U.S. politicians and media's ceaseless rhetoric against Muslims over Israel's war against the Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. Officials and Muslim rights activists said the man was charged with hate crimes for stabbing the Palestinian boy to death and wounding his mother, Reuters reported.

Police said in a statement that the boy was stabbed with a military-style knife with a 7-inch (18-cm) serrated blade. The 32-year-old woman was also stabbed multiple times but is expected to survive the attack that occurred on Saturday in Plainfield Township, about 40 miles (64 km) southwest of Chicago. The man reportedly shouted, "You Muslims must die!"

"Detectives were able to determine that both victims in this brutal attack were targeted by the suspect due to them being Muslim and the ongoing Middle Eastern conflict involving Hamas and the Israelis."

The suspect, Joseph Czuba, was charged with first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, two counts of hate crime and aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, the sheriff's office said. When police arrived at the scene, they said they found Czuba sitting on the ground outside the home with a cut to his forehead. The victims were in a bedroom.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) blamed the Islamophobic rhetoric by politicians and media for the crime. CAIR identified the boy as Wadea Al-Fayoume and said the woman, Hanaan Shahin, was his mother.

"We are shocked and disturbed to learn that a landlord in Chicago expressing anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian views broke into a Muslim family's apartment and attacked them with a knife, injuring the mother and killing her 6-year-old son, Wadea Al-Fayoume," CAIR said on the social media platform X.

"The Islamophobic rhetoric and anti-Palestinian racism being spread by politicians, media outlets, and social media platforms must stop," CAIR added.

FBI Director Christopher Wray on Saturday warned the International Association of Chiefs of Police conference to stay vigilant "in this heightened environment."

"There's no question we're seeing an increase in reported threats, and we've got to be on the lookout, especially for lone actors who may take inspiration from recent events to commit violence of their own," Wray told the conference in San Diego, according to the FBI website.

Pakistani American activist Dr. Shireen Bangash wrote on X, "The hate-spitting US media is directly responsible for the murder of this 6-year-old Muslim boy in Chicago." She added that she hopes the Editorial Boards of CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, New York Times and BBC "must be very pleased with their Islamophobic performances."

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