

# Samidoun Mourns Muhammad Salah, Palestinian Community Leader, Former Prisoner in US and Israeli Jails

Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network expresses its condolences to the Salah family and the broader Palestinian community of Chicago and the United States on the passing of [Muhammad Salah](#), prominent Palestinian activist and community leader in the Chicago area, former political prisoner in Israeli jails, survivor of Israeli torture, and subject of extensive U.S. state repression. We express our deepest condolences to Muhammad's wife Maryam, his children, family, loved ones, and entire community.

Muhammad Salah's victory in court in 2006 – and his second victory six years later, with his removal from the 'Specially Designated Terrorist' list – was, as the [US Palestinian Community Network](#) Chicago writes, “a prominent court victory for our community in the period of the 'War on Terrorism' and the consistent political and legal attacks on Palestinian rights and our struggle for national liberation.”

*Palestinian-American community leader Muhammad Salah passes after his battle with cancer* <https://t.co/pDcKIESCXX>

– *Palestine in America (@P\_i\_A\_Mag)* [April 25, 2016](#)

For over twenty years, Salah faced joint persecution at the hands of the Israeli occupation and the U.S. government. A grocer in Chicago, he traveled to deliver humanitarian and financial aid to Palestinians in Gaza in 1993 and was seized as he entered; this was before the so-called “[material support](#)

[laws](#),” the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and the later revisions to follow in the Patriot Act and elsewhere, existed. However, the Israeli state’s policy of mass arrests of Palestinians and the criminalization of Palestinian political, social and national institutions was of course in full force, as it had been for decades; and Salah’s case played a significant role in the development of U.S./Israeli strategies of repression of the Palestinian-American community and its strong, active role in the Palestinian national liberation movement.

Salah was beaten and blindfolded before undergoing “extensive interrogation” at the hands of the Israeli Shin Bet. Michael Deutsch and Erica Thompson, Salah’s lawyers, noted in their extensive article on the case ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#)) the various forms of physical and psychological torture inflicted on Salah by the Shin Bet and collaborators during a five-week interrogation period, after which he signed on to a forced confession. The Israeli state – with U.S. official and media complicity – launched a propaganda blitz not only labeling Salah an activist with Hamas, but a “military leader” heading a massive “U.S. leadership network” for Hamas. An Israeli military court sentenced him to five years in prison – a harsh, unjust penalty, yet also highly incongruent with the dramatic claims of Israeli officials and media.

The targeting of Muhammad Salah was always intended as a mechanism not only to target this one Palestinian, but the entire Palestinian community in the United States. As Salah’s lawyers [wrote](#), “The goal had been...to get a confession that would...start a movement to cut off U.S. funding and support for the Palestinian cause, and provide a road map for pro-Israel forces in the United States to target supporters of Palestine.”

*On Muhammad Salah, who I tweeted about earlier.*  
<https://t.co/pdeb9Ib4p0> [pic.twitter.com/W5VAYTAPJS](https://pic.twitter.com/W5VAYTAPJS)

– Deanna ██████ (@deannaothman) [April 25, 2016](#)

We mourn the loss of Muhammad Salah, a victim and survivor of injustice who continued to fight for justice and confront oppression throughout his life, and extend our deepest condolences to his family, loved ones, and community – and we pledge to carry on the struggle, to seek freedom and justice for all political prisoners in U.S. prisons – from Mumia Abu-Jamal, Oscar Lopez Rivera and Leonard Peltier to Abdelhaleem Ashqar, Ramea Odeh, and the Holy Land Five – Israeli prisons, and international prisons; to confront the so-called “anti-terror” law that terrorize oppressed communities and target liberation movements; and to struggle for justice and liberation for Palestine and the Palestinian people.

– Read more: [Samidoun Mourns Muhammad Salah, Palestinian Community Leader, Former Prisoner in US and Israeli Jails](#) – Samidoun