



## **Nabra Hassanen's murder feeds anti-immigrant rhetoric on the conservative internet**

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The gruesome killing of a 17-year-old girl in Virginia this week has become fuel for political narratives on either side of the US spectrum.

Nabra Hassanen was with friends outside her mosque, the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center, when a driver rode over the curb and scattered the crowd of teens. He then took Hassanen in his car and beat her to death with a bat.

The girl's family thought from the start that her killing was a hate crime, that she was targeted for wearing a hijab. Plenty of people voiced their agreement online and continue to do so.

But law enforcement handling the case says the killer did not commit a hate crime. Officials say it was an incident of road rage. News has since broken that Darwin Martinez Torres, a 22-year-old Salvadoran immigrant in the country without authorization, is a suspect in the case.

And now people who rejected the hate crime allegations from the start are saying there's no way it was a hate crime, because the suspect isn't a white American. Additionally, there's the largely unsupported claim that undocumented immigrants are a danger to Americans.

The Trump administration has set up the Victims of Immigrant Crime Engagement Office for people like Hassanen's family to report exactly this kind of crime. But Alex Nowrasteh of the Cato Institute, speaking at Georgetown University this week, said immigrant crime rates are low.

Nowrasteh compared incarceration rates for native-born Americans and immigrants, both lawful and unlawful. He said that excluding immigration-related offenses, immigrants are incarcerated at about a third of the rate of native-born Americans.

"[Undocumented immigrants'] incarceration rate is about exactly the same as it is for lawful immigrants in the United States," Nowrasteh says. "So, when people tell me that lawful immigrants, illegal immigrants, unlawful ones are crime prone and we can't measure it, I like to show them this type of evidence."

Nowrasteh also says the US government has a history of trying to vilify immigrants.

"If you go all the way back to the early 1900s, you take every government commission — usually started to make immigrants look bad — studying this issue," he says, "[they] couldn't mess with the numbers enough to make it look like immigrants are more crime prone."