

Born here, killed far away

By IAN MUNRO
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Malki Roth was 15 years old, an accomplished musician and youth club leader, heading into year 11 at school and thinking about studying at university.

Born in Melbourne, like her father and three of her siblings, Malki's life was rich with promise. Anything was possible. Now she is dead; killed on Thursday by a suicide bomber in the heart of Jerusalem.

After a frantic afternoon and evening, her family found her body in the pre-dawn hours at the coroner's office in Tel Aviv. If anything could deepen their grief it is this: the world forgot that behind the statistics of body counts and reprisals was their lovely daughter and sister.

"She was murdered by a fanatic who didn't know a thing about her," her father, Arnold Roth, said yesterday. "It horrifies me that people are making comparisons - there's this the Palestinians did; there's that the Israelis did.

"I am just hoping that people who care enough to read will see there was a wonderful human being behind this story.

"She was a fun-loving kid, a wonderful musician - a prize-winning flautist. We have a handicapped child and she has developed great sensitivities to the needs of the handicapped. Malki was very involved in working as a youth leader, extremely giving, very popular."

Mr Roth said he and his wife, Frimet, moved their family to Israel in 1988, although his extended family remains in Melbourne.

"We felt there are Jewish values which you can only pass on to your children when you are living in a land that has always been the Jewish homeland," he said.

"That's been true and we are blessed with wonderful kids. This is a terrible tragedy but you have to draw a distinction between the tragedy and the reason we are living here, which is to live a full Jewish life."