



THE CARTER CENTER

Background: The Tent of Nations

The Tent of Nations, a family farm and center where “people from many different countries come together to learn, to share, and to build bridges of understanding and hope,” urgently needs support and solidarity from the international community in the wake of the destruction carried out recently on the Nassar family’s land and other escalating threats they have received since the 2019 completion of their land re-registration application. Although the Nassars have owned the land for over 100 years, since the time of the British Mandate, Israel has delayed formal recognition of the farm’s registration and ownership.

The farm,¹ situated in Area C under exclusive Israeli administrative and security control, is near the village of Nahalin, southwest of Bethlehem in the West Bank. It sits on a hilltop surrounded by several settlements (part of the Gush Etzion bloc). Despite the Nassars’ use and documented ownership of the land, in 1991, the Israeli authorities declared the farm “state land.” Since then, the Nassars have been struggling to prevent its confiscation and damage to farm buildings and crops. They battled the “state land” designation through the Israeli judicial system until 2006, when the Supreme Court ruled that the Nassars may proceed with re-registering their land. But with the re-registration in process, the Israeli army uprooted hundreds fruit trees in 2014 even though the family had appealed the notice from the Israeli Civil Administration. These actions prompted significant international outcry as the Tent of Nations has become a symbol of nonviolent resistance and peacemaking.

In 2019, after many delays, including Israeli authorities’ misplacing the application, the Nassars were notified that their registration application was complete², but they await the long-overdue response, for which they will likely need to petition the Supreme Court. In the meantime, the threats are escalating. In 2020, members of another Palestinian family claimed ownership of parts of the land, erecting fences, farming some parcels without permission, attacking Nassar family members, and vandalizing their home and crops. On May 21, 2021, someone set fire to the land, destroying about 1,000 trees. These recent attacks have increased the vulnerability of the Nassars and their farm. On June 9, Israeli authorities entered the farm with a bulldozer over the Nassars’ objection, destroying the fence, driving over newly plowed fields, and cutting down approximately 50 olive trees. On June 14, someone vandalized a farm building and vehicle. On July 3, masked assailants attacked the family in their car.

Completion of the land re-registration would constitute Israeli authorities’ recognition of the Nassars as private owners of this land, end their legal struggle, and reduce their farm’s exposure to risks. The Nassars are in urgent need of international support to protect themselves and their land from attacks, including demands for the completion of their land re-registration process without further delay.

¹ The Nassar family owns plots of land located in Wadi Salem (Alkaff) Alkafr in Nahalin, Bethlehem district. The land was registered in 1924 and 1925 in Bethlehem’s land registry office, volume No. 1, pages 3 & 4 and also registered in 1958 in the financial deeds under Plot No. 17, 161 and 157 of block No. 4.

² Re-registration Case Numbers. 3714/2 and 3715/2.