

Israeli Settlers Beat 70-year-old Activist, Threaten to Kill Her

Hagar Gefen and another activist were helping Palestinians with an olive harvest south of Bethlehem when they were attacked by settlers

A 70-year-old Israeli woman and another activist were attacked by Jewish settlers armed with stones and clubs in the Bethlehem area on Wednesday while helping Palestinians harvest olives in Kisan, a village south of Bethlehem, according to testimony from the volunteers.

Hagar Gefen, 70, said that although this was not the first time she was attacked for helping Palestinians harvest their crops, she did not imagine that such severe violence would be directed toward her. Gefen was moderately injured in the attack, and was hospitalized at Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem with a broken hand and ribs, a punctured lung and stitches in her head.

Gefen said she arrived at the grove together with other Jewish and Italian activists to help Palestinian olive harvesters in [Kisan](#). “While we were going up, several boys from Ma’ale Amos chased after us. The grove is fenced in, but when we got there, the owner discovered that the olives had already been stolen from him.”

She said that the activists watered the olive trees and tried to recover any remaining olives that were left, when they noticed a large group of young people running down a hill and wearing masks. “We started taking pictures, and I told Michal (another activist who was at the event and was also attacked) ‘Take pictures and get them [the boys] out of here.’ Michal took pictures while they were running towards us and waving stones. I made a detour around the hill, and they managed to reach me and threw big stones our way.”

At this point, Gefen said the settlers threw her to the ground and began to beat her. “They took my backpack and camera from me, and screamed that they would kill me and that we have no right to exist in this country.”

Gefen did not file a complaint after the incident, but the police gathered testimonies from the activist Michal and other volunteers who were at the scene. So far the police have not contacted Gefen to back up her testimony.

Despite the attack, Gefen made it clear that she does not intend to stop volunteering in the West Bank. “I want to continue to protect the Palestinian farmers and shepherds,” she said. “I hope to return soon to accompany shepherds in the Jordan Valley.”

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