

November 26, 2025

B/10795

**Mr. Rifat Kassis**

Dear Mr. Kassis,

I write to you today with urgency and deep concern. The area of Beit Sahour is around 6,000 dunums with more than 15,000 residents. Its strategic location serves as a crucial nexus connecting the northern and southern governorates. Yet, it now faces the imminent threat of an illegal settlement being established on its border behind Osh Ghurab, which will have severe consequences. This settlement is not simply a construction project—it is an act of dispossession. It is being built directly upon Palestinians' lands, homes, and backyards, stealing the soil from beneath peaceful families who have lived here for generations.

First, it will cut off Beit Sahour from its eastern border, dividing our community into two areas separated by illegal and violent settlers. Second, it will allow for increased attacks on the residents of Beit Sahour and invasion of their homes. It will bring fear, unrest, pain and conflict. Historically, Osh Ghurab has always been the open public social space for all individuals and families to gather whether for private or public events. It is the place where the residents of Beit Sahour go to for recreational activities, including a public park, children's playground, football field, theatre, and indoor hall. Osh Ghurab sits on a land categorized as Area C, meaning it is administered by the Israeli government. Overlooked by an Israeli military post, Osh Ghurab is one of the major landmarks of Beit Sahour. The building of an illegal Israeli settlement right behind Osh Ghurab will disrupt our entire community, starting with displacement of people living in the land, proceeded by constant fear of settler attacks towards the residents of Beit Sahour, ultimately pushing our citizens to migration.

Already, the West Bank has witnessed a sharp escalation in settler violence. According to the **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, there were **757 settler attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank since January 2025, a 13% increase compared to 2024**. These attacks include assaults, destruction of property, and intimidation, often carried out with impunity. Human Rights Watch has already documented **forced displacement of Palestinian families**, describing the situation as a crime against humanity, which is now reaching the peaceful city of Beit Sahour.

As a distinguished international organization with a long and esteemed history, and as a trusted institution dedicated to supporting Christian communities, we turn to you in this critical moment. We appeal to your moral responsibility and your influential global networks to help us convey our voice to the world regarding the illegal settlement currently being established in the Osh Ghurab area of Beit Sahour. Your support in raising awareness among your partners, friends, and church communities worldwide is essential to ensuring that the truth is heard and that justice prevails.

We wholeheartedly appreciate your support and look forward to your continued solidarity.

With urgency and faith,

**Dr. Elias Iseed**

Mayor of Beit Sahour