



31 January 2026

To:

Minister of Defense, **Israel Katz**

Chief of the General Staff, **Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir**

Commander of Central Command, **Maj. Gen. Avraham (Avi) Aharon Bluth**

Re: Rebuttal of Regavim's Claims – Immediate Protection for the Community of Umm al-Khair and an End to Settler Violence

We, mothers working on the ground and accompanying civilian communities in the South Hebron Hills, write to you following the letter sent by the organization “Regavim” on 30 January 2026. That letter presents a dramatic and misleading picture of events, relying on threatening language and unfounded accusations, and attempts to create a false narrative of a “wild takeover” and “serious violations of the law,” rather than an accurate description of the realities on the ground.

During a tour conducted by Regavim representatives, policymakers and the public were presented with an imagined version of events, claiming that “rapid construction of a sports facility and soccer field was exposed in the illegal cluster of Umm al-Khair,” accompanied by inflammatory quotations and threats of legal action. This was done in complete disregard of the facts, the broader context of violence and land seizure, and the precise determination by enforcement authorities themselves that no offense had been committed.

Regavim’s letter is not a factual document but a cynical political maneuver: an attempt to turn a minimal civilian-community initiative, temporary synthetic grass mats, and a children’s play space into a “security threat,” while concealing ongoing settler violence, land expropriation, and selective enforcement occurring in the very same area.

Below are the facts as they stand, along with a point-by-point refutation of Regavim’s claims.

There is no “illegal construction” and no permanent facilities.

Contrary to Regavim’s assertions, no construction took place. No foundations were poured, no structures erected, and no permanent infrastructure installed. What occurred was the temporary placement of portable synthetic grass mats for community use, without concrete and without permanent attachment to the land. This was examined and confirmed on site by the army, the police, and the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, who explicitly determined that no violation occurred.



Not an “illegal cluster,” but a long-standing civilian community

Umm al-Khair is a recognized Palestinian community that has lived on its land for decades. Portraying the community as an “illegal cluster” is a deliberate attempt to delegitimize Palestinian civilian presence and does not withstand factual or legal scrutiny.

The real land takeover and the violation of court orders by settlers

Approximately six months ago, four settler caravans were placed in the heart of Umm al-Khair; olive trees were uprooted, and a dirt road was paved to create a forced contiguity with the settlement of Carmel. Following legal action, a court issued an order prohibiting further work and habitation. That order was blatantly violated: work continued, and the caravans were occupied, without enforcement. Instead of enforcing the order against violators, the Civil Administration revived 13 old demolition orders issued 13–20 years ago against structures in the village and announced its intention to execute them. This is selective enforcement and collective punishment. ([Haaretz, 02.12.2025 | Matan Golan](#))

Settler violence unpunished

After the grass mats were laid, settlers armed with cameras arrived, issued threats, and made racist remarks. In the evening, dozens of settlers returned, blocked access roads with stones, severed connections between homes, uprooted trees, and harassed residents. Again, security forces determined that the community acted lawfully, yet in practice, residents were forced to clear the blockades themselves.

The human cost of abandonment

Against the backdrop of this takeover in the heart of the community, [Awdah Hathaleen](#) was murdered a few months ago by a fatal shot to the heart. To this day, there has been no accountability; the shooter remains free. This is the proper context of “abandonment of security,” not for residents of Carmel, but for an unprotected civilian community.

Regavim’s letter does not advance the rule of law; it cynically weaponizes the law to block minimal civilian spaces, a community library, a playground, a breath of life for children, while obscuring settler violence, land theft, and selective enforcement.

Our immediate demand: full rejection of Regavim’s claims and public clarification that no violation occurred in Umm al-Khair.



Palestinian communities today live without protection, exposed to daily terror and systematic harm. Equality and justice are not privileges; they are fundamental rights of every human being. The loss of humanity is a trauma the Jewish people know all too well from history. Precisely because of that memory, the painful question arises: can an army acting in the name of the Jewish state lose its humanity and become a political instrument that abandons civilians and harms civilian communities?

We demand clearly, unequivocally, and immediately effective and tangible protection for the residents of Umm al-Khair. Not statements, not reviews, and not delays, but protective presence, equal enforcement of the law, and an immediate end to settler violence, road blockades, incursions, and harassment. Responsibility for the lives and safety of the community's residents rests with you here and now.

We refuse to accept a reality in which the law ceases to be equal, violence is normalized, and humanity erodes. The responsibility to halt this deterioration, moral, ethical, and security-related, lies with you.

Mothers Against Violence

Ketty Bar

Hamutal Guri

Yonat Efron

Rivka Munitz

Dafna Efron

Yael Niv

Suzanne Fite Stern

Iris Rapoport

Over 200 people have already signed the letter demanding immediate protection for the residents of Umm al-Khair in the face of ongoing violence and harassment. Now is the time to join, strengthen the public call, and increase pressure for action.

 *Sign the letter here: <https://www.mavisrael.com/umm-al-khair>*