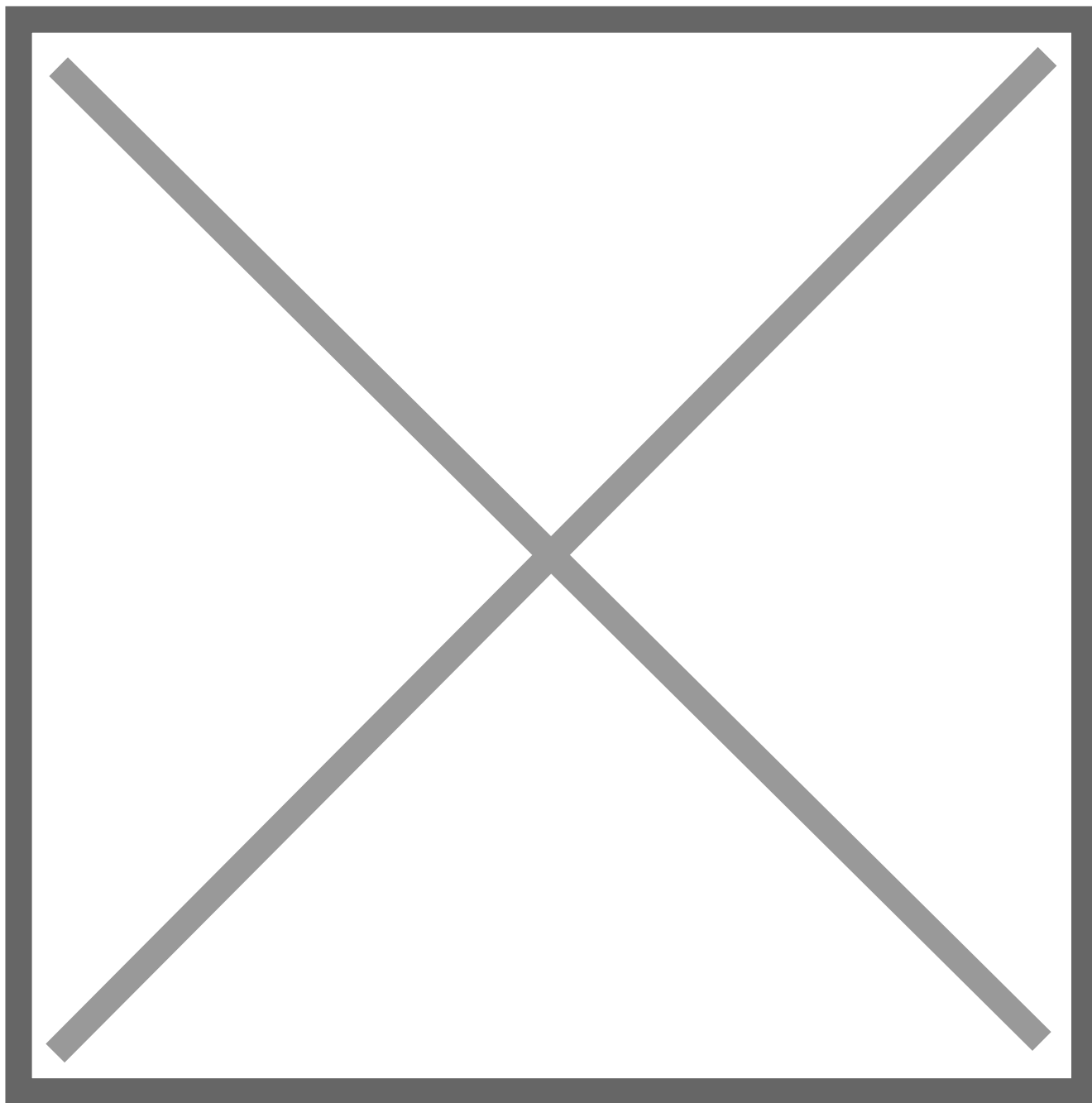


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Palestinian Hanan Hameail gestures while standing inside her house in Turmus Ayya in the Israeli-occupied West Bank Oct. 19, 2026, damaged in an Israeli settler attack. (OSV News/Reuters/Ammar Awad)

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Jerusalem — October 20, 2026

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Christian leaders in the Holy Land condemned the latest attack by Israeli settlers in the West Bank against Palestinians and European diplomats during an annual olive harvest.

In a statement released Oct. 20 by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the patriarchs and heads of the Churches in Jerusalem said the "wild attack" in Taybeh, one of the last remaining Christian villages in the West Bank, was "not an isolated incident."

"In the past weeks, the Palestinian villages of the West Bank have been exposed to a wide-scale terror by settlers, which is reaching a peak during this time of the olive harvest, when families go to their lands to collect what they need to live and renew their generations-long bond with their lands," the statement read.

The Oct. 17 attack occurred when a convoy of European diplomats from Belgium, Poland and France, as well as Palestinian civilians, were ambushed by masked settlers, the Reuters news agency reported. Among those attacked was Bernard Baudoux, the mayor of the French commune of Aulnoye-Aymeries, who told Reuters he was "violently attacked" and "thrown to the ground" by the assailants.

The attack occurred just one day after settlers committed a similar attack against Palestinians during the olive harvest Oct. 16, setting fire to olive trees and throwing rocks, leaving several injured, including Heidi Levine, an American photographer for The Washington Post.

According to The Times of Israel, police are looking into a complaint against Rabbi Dov Lior, a hardline religious Zionist who issued an Oct. 16 religious ruling that allowed Jews to harvest olive trees on Palestinian property "in order to show to the public our ownership of the land, and in so doing one fulfills the (religious) commandment of conquering the land."

The complaint was filed by Rabbis for Human Rights, an Israeli-based organization composed of rabbis, as well as rabbinical students and leaders who advocate for civil and human rights in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

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In their statement, the patriarchs and heads of churches regarded the religious ruling "as unfounded, very worrying and dangerous, and absolutely unacceptable" and expressed appreciation to the "rabbis and Jewish voices" who "have publicly rejected it."

While expressing their gratitude to Israeli President Isaac Herzog for condemning the attack, the Church leaders stressed that verbal denunciations are not enough without legal consequences.

"Unfortunately, the facts on the ground show that these attacks continue because of the impunity enjoyed by those who commit them," the statement said.

While acknowledging subsequent arrests made by Israeli police, the patriarchs called on authorities to ensure law enforcement can be carried out "in a serious and consistent manner."

"We call upon the competent authorities to bring those responsible to justice, and we urge the international community to intensify its efforts to ensure the protection of the people of Taybeh and the West Bank, as well as all those who visit these areas to express their solidarity," the Christian leaders said.