Israel controls the aquifers and the water amount available for Palestinians. The water company Mekorot, supported by the Civil Administration and the IDF, destroys dozens of wells, some of them ancient, as well as reservoirs used to collect rain water (also “illegal”). Hundreds of acres of agricultural land have been dried up as irrigation pipes have been pulled out. Fields of tomatoes, beans, eggplants and cucumbers die just before they are harvested. “I am watching my life dry up before my eyes”, says Atta, whose plastic drip irrigation pipes are still intact. The Civil Administration begins a concentrated campaign to pull out all the “illegal” irrigation pipes Atta and his neighbors used to water their crops, thus intentionally drying out the Baqa’a Valley.

All their connections were cut by Mekorot in 2011 and have not been allowed to reconnect. The Civil Administration began a concentrated campaign to pull out all the irrigation pipes that Atta’s family has been using for years. The Civil Administration has officially declared that his farm will not be demobilised, but that his land is considered “state land” onto which Israeli plans to extend the Kiryat Arba settlement. The new neighborhood is to be called Noalet Hevron, the “Visitas of Hebron.”

2016

In 2012, the car of Atta’s brother, Jawdi, was burned by settlers and his home barraged with stones. Jawdi calls the Israeli police whose station is five minutes away in the Kiryat Arba settlement; they arrive three hours later, and then leave without investigating. It wasn’t much of a car, but the battered 1979 Peugeot mini-van was vital to the family. On rainy days Jawdi would take the kids to school, since normally they walk miles over rocky mountain paths, often facing attacks by settlers. Jawdi also used the car to make frequent trips to the hospital with his 80-year-old mother. And Jawdi used his van to take his crops, tomatoes, cucumbers and grapes – to market in Hebron. The car, says Jawdi, was “the arms and legs of the family.”

2017

In 2013, Atta Jaber testified before the UN Human Rights Council. Since then Atta has received written confirmation from an Israeli court that his home will not be demolished, but that his land is considered “state land” onto which Israeli plans to extend the Kiryat Arba settlement. The new neighborhood is to be called Noalet Hevron, the “Visitas of Hebron.”

2018

The Israeli Civil Administration and Jewish settlers from the Kiryat Arba settlement invaded Atta’s land and crops on a weekly basis. For three hours on Friday, 12 July, dozens of settlers led by Malachi Levinger, the son of the violent settlement pioneer Moshe Levinger and the mayor of Kiryat Arba, invaded the family’s property, uprooted Atta’s plants and replaced them with “Jewish” ones.

The Israeli Civil Administration claims the Jaber land is “Israel state land” and sends bulldozers to destroy 150 fruit trees, including olives, figs, and almonds, along with grape vines and four miles of Atta’s cisterns, resulting in $50,000 of damage. Atta’s family has suffered from every form of oppression under occupation, stones to prevent harvesting crops, violence to prevent farming their vegetables and fruit. Atta’s daughter filmed the incident using a camera from B’Tselem, the human rights organization. Atta’s family has struggled to remain in their home and on their land. Jewish settlers alike have tried to make their lives so difficult that they will leave, enabling settlers to take over their property. On 23rd February 2018, bulldozers sent by Israeli authorities razed the final 1.5 acres of land still farmed by Atta, leaving the family destitute.

Over the years the Jaber family has farmed by Atta, leaving the family destitute. On 23rd February 2018, bulldozers sent by Israeli authorities razed the final 1.5 acres of land still farmed by Atta, leaving the family destitute.

Please act to demonstrate your solidarity with the Atta Jaber family by:

• Telling their story. Watch this five-minute film of Atta and then send it to your network.
www.icahd.org/2016/04/04/atta-jabers-story/

• Lobbying your MP. This story puts a human face on the Occupation. Continue to urge your MP to write to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office demanding that Israel be called to account for its violations of the 4th Geneva Convention.

• Donating to the Atta Jaber family. via www.icahd.org/
The Jaber Family have lived in the Baqa'a Valley of the West Bank, east of the city of Hebron, for the past 700 years. It is one of the most fertile areas of Palestine, filled with vineyards, fruit orchards and small farms. For generations Atta’s family lived in a spacious cave behind their current home, which they still use for storage and cooking. They farmed 14 acres, their cisterns filled with water rainwater irrigating their crops in the summer.

Although they have deeds going back 700 years on this land, in 1967, most of their land comes under Israel’s Occupation of the West Bank. In 1981, Israel established the “Civil” Administration, which is a military government over the Occupied Territory, the Jaber’s land was declared “state land.” In 1985 the Gush Hanina neighborhood of Kiryat Arba is established on the Jabers’ land. Since then they have had to fight for every square inch.

The family loses just under 2.5 acres of farmland to Road 60, the main Israeli highway through the West Bank which was routed through their property. In the same year the Jabers are allowed to connect to the water pipes that the Israeli company Mekorot ran through the valley to serve the settlements but Atta and the Palestinian were not allowed to continue using the “Israeli rainwater” that they collected in their cisterns and reservoirs.

The Jaber home is demolished by the Israeli authorities for the first time, 1997, for lack of a building permit. Atta had spent five years trying to obtain a permit to construct a home on land he owns. Out of despair, he builds his home without a permit. (ICAHD’s association with the Jaber family begins when the family’s demolished home was rebuilt with help of ICAHD and Christian Peacemaker Teams. It was demolished a second time the very next month. In that violent demolition Atta was severely injured and arrested. Having no where else to go, Atta insisted on rebuilding, and their family with large stones from the high wall above Atta’s house, shattering his leg. He never fully recovered.

The home of Atta’s brother Jawad is demolished. At this time 17 people are crammed into the home of Atta’s parents, located just across the road from his house. The Israeli authorities begin massive land confiscation accompanied by additional settlement and road construction in the Baqa’a Valley. In addition to land already confiscated from the Jabers for the building of Road 60, the Israeli authorities designate an additional 380 metres on either side of the road as a “buffer zone” upon which Palestinians are forbidden to build or farm, land which they continue to own but which they cannot use.

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Deeds shown above

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Settler youth pelting the family with large stones from the high wall above Atta’s father’s house becomes a routine event. In one attack Atta’s 90-year-old father falls running from the settlers, shattering his leg. He never fully recovered.

December 2000

In December 2000, hundreds of settlers invade the Jabers’ third home on a Friday night, living in it over the Sabbath. In the evening, after prayers, they smash the interior stonework and set fire to the furnishings. Although Israeli police and Civil Administration officials were present the whole time, they prevented the family and Israeli peace activists who came in solidarity from approaching their home. Later when the settlers return to their homes, none are ever arrested, despite video documentation of the attack.

In 2007, due to lack of water, the family attempted to build a modest reservoir for catching rainwater. It was demolished. Watch the BBC documentary www.tve.org/film/earth-report-reservoir-raiders

The second home rebuilt after demolition on land they own

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