

Brad Lander Was Harvesting Headlines, Not Olives

THE LIE

Brad Lander, the Democratic nominee for Congress in New York's 10th District, says Israeli soldiers detained him, along with a group of rabbis and volunteers, for "simply harvesting olives" with Palestinian farmers in Judea. "Harvesting olives isn't a crime under any law I know," he says.

THE TRUTH

Lander joined a Palestinian olive harvest next to an Israeli community that wasn't coordinated with the IDF, as part of a political trip two weeks before his own congressional election in the United States. It was a publicity event, not farm work.

BACKGROUND

- Lander is the Democratic nominee for New York's 10th Congressional District, a former New York City comptroller, and an ally of Mayor Zohran Mamdani.
- On October 21, 2026, Israeli soldiers and police detained about 90 activists from Rabbis for Human Rights and the "Protect the Harvest" coalition. The group was picking olives for a landowner from the Arab village of Nahalin, in groves right next to the Jewish city of Beitar Illit in Gush Etzion. About two hours into the harvest, forces declared a closed military zone and took the group in for identity checks.
- Lander was released with a warning after about three hours, and most of the others were released the same day.
- Harvests next to Israeli communities must be coordinated with the IDF in advance, and this one wasn't. The IDF gave the landowner contact details so he can schedule his harvest for another day, with soldiers there to protect it.
- Lander announced his detention on X while it was still underway. [X](#) Mayor Mamdani amplified the post, accusing Israel of "genocide" and demanding an end to the "occupation."

TRUTH EXPLAINED

- **Lander said openly that the trip was about messaging, not olives.** The day before his detention, he posted a video and wrote that his goals were to protect the harvest "and to shed a light on the reality of the occupation." Within hours of his release, he held a press call with reporters and pledged to sign on to the Stop the Settlements Act, a bill that would sanction Israelis in Judea and Samaria. [amNY](#)
- **Israel already has a system that lets Arab farmers harvest next to Israeli communities while keeping those communities secure, and it works.** The IDF says about 100 coordinated harvests have taken place this season, bringing in dozens of tons of olives with Israeli security present and no unusual incidents. Lander's group chose to skip it. The Nahalin landowner was never barred from his trees. All he has to do is call and schedule his harvest. [Israel National News](#)
- **Israeli officials saw this coming before the harvest season began.** The Yesha Council, which represents the Jewish communities of Judea and Samaria, warned Defense Minister Israel Katz that activists were planning provocations and named Protect the Harvest, the coalition Lander joined, as one of the groups organizing them. Katz ordered officials to pursue orders barring activists who threaten public order from the area. [i24NEWS](#)
- **Lander's group included anti-Israel activists.** Israel Police said four foreign members of the group were flagged for anti-Israel activity online and for supporting organizations opposed to Israel, and sent them to deportation hearings. Police also confirmed that no one was harmed during the detentions. [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **Lander walked out of a three-hour ID check unharmed, with nothing more than a warning, and immediately accused Israel of ethnic cleansing.** In the same post announcing his release, he called his detention part of "very clearly state-sponsored ethnic cleansing." No one was hurt. No one was charged. No farmer lost his trees. Ethnic cleansing means driving a people from their land through terror and mass killing. Nothing of the sort happened here. [X](#)

Brad Lander Was Harvesting Headlines, Not Olives

QUOTES

"This was not about harvesting olives. It was about harvesting headlines. Brad Lander came looking for a confrontation. Now he is pretending to be its victim." - Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

TAKEAWAY

Brad Lander did not fly to Judea and Samaria two weeks before Election Day to pick olives. He came with a message and a camera, skipped the coordination system that kept 100 other harvests safe, and left with a press call and a policy pledge. The farmer can still harvest his trees with Israeli protection. The only thing Lander harvested was press coverage. Lander didn't come to help a farmer. He came to smear Israel and score political points with his voters in New York.