



Standing With Israel on Sacred Ground: The KKL-JNF Re'im Forest

"Desert and wasteland shall rejoice over them, and the plain shall rejoice and shall blossom like a rose." (Yeshayahu (Isaiah), 35)

There are places in Israel where the land itself is a witness. Re'im Forest, situated near the Nova Memorial Site and the "Swords of Iron" Forest, has become exactly that.

On October 7th, this quiet, green expanse became the backdrop to unspeakable atrocities. Israel faced one of its darkest days in its history when the Hamas terror group initiated a sudden attack from the Gaza Strip. As part of the attack, hundreds of innocent lives were lost at the Supernova music festival, an open-air event celebrating peace and unity.

Near Kibbutz Re'im and in a KKL-JNF forest, 364 individuals were killed in the massacre, while countless others were wounded. In a heartbreaking assault on humanity, over 40 people were taken hostage, leaving a permanent scar on the hearts of Israelis and friends worldwide.

Today, this area demands more than remembrance; it calls for revival.

As part of this year's KKL-JNF Tu BiShvat campaign, on the holiday that insists we plant even when facing many challenges, we are rebuilding Re'im Forest with determination, clear vision, and the kind of stubborn hope that built and is still building Israel.

Decades of planting shaped Re'im into a flourishing ecosystem, but the past years have been brutal. Repeated fires caused by Hamas' attacks have scorched large tracts, soil erosion carved through the landscape, and emergency IDF activity during the war left further scars. Repairing damage like this requires planning, resources, and long-term commitment.

Yet even after everything, life here refuses to quit. In an ecological survey conducted in February 2025, researchers found plant species on the brink of extinction, like the Sea Campion, still clinging on. Protected species such as the Anemone and Thyme-Leaved Savory continue to bloom. Wildlife sightings include Israeli gazelles, foxes, and jackals. The forest is signaling us - help me now, and I'll flourish again.

This area has biblical and historical significance as well. The Re'aim Forest is in the vicinity of Nahal Gerar, known for its biblical connections to the ancient city of Gerar, where King Avimelech ruled and where the patriarchs Avraham and Yitzchak sojourned with their flocks, as it is said in the Book of Genesis 20.1: "Avraham went thence into the country of Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; sojourning in Gerar." The city of Gerar is now generally believed to be located at Tel Haror.

Supporting the rehabilitation of Re'im Forest is not just environmental work - it's moral clarity in action. It's standing with the People of Israel, honoring the young lives and victims lost at the Nova Festival, and restoring a landscape that symbolizes resilience over ruin, and God's Chosen People victorious over their enemies.

For Christian friends and supporters of Israel who feel connected to both the land and those who defend it, this project speaks directly to that bond, simply by doing the work the land needs.

KKL-JNF is already repairing soil damage, restoring burned areas, preventing further erosion, and preparing for strategic replanting that strengthens biodiversity and protects endangered species. But rebuilding a forest at this scale requires partners and friends.

This Tu BiShvat, KKL-JNF invites you to join us in turning devastation into renewal. Help restore Re'im Forest, because the land remembers, and together, we are helping it heal.

