

# An introduction to the SJEHG and its work





The Knights Templar (KT) in London have been associated with the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital for many years. As part of KT in London, you are now part of this unique relationship.

This booklet will give you an introduction into the hospital itself, the unbelievable work that it achieves, and an insight into the very people that make it so special.

The St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG) is woven into the fabric of the Knights Templar's charitable contributions across the United Orders. It is our single supported charity and we are very proud we have continuously donated, every year for over 100 years.

Without your help, the SJEHG would not be able to achieve the results it has. London has played its part, not just in fund raising, but in promoting the aims of the SJEHG and increasing the awareness of the value that your contributions make to the patients that they are able to treat.

**St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is the oldest and only charitable provider of expert eye care in the Middle East and has clinics in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem, treating patients regardless of ethnicity, religion or ability to pay.**

After receiving a staggering £228,400 from the Knights Templar which funded the new children's ward, the lead centre for paediatric ophthalmology, the ward was opened by The Grand Master, Paul Clement in 2022 (left) and later visited by London Support.



# Why



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Yazan from Gaza  
His story can be found on London Support

# Why

St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group transforms lives by saving sight in the world's most unique region facing decades of conflict resulting in the poorest people lacking the basic privileges of ordinary life.

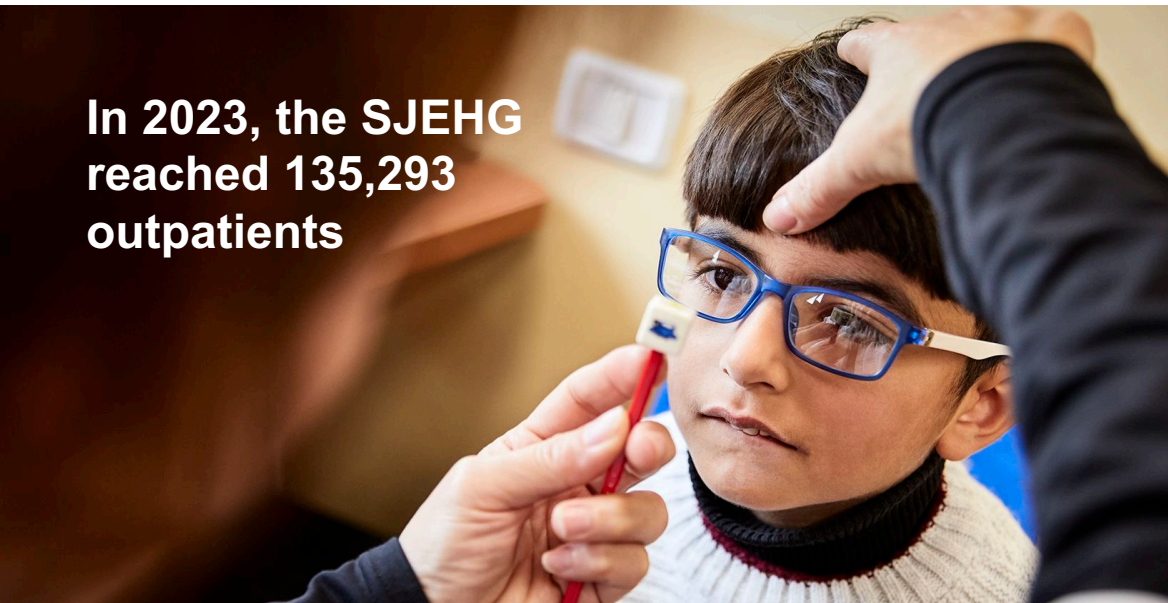
The main hospital in East Jerusalem has been operating for 141 years. The hospital is the main charitable provider of eye care and sees many of the most complex eye cases from across the occupied Palestinian Territories, which are referred to them from medical centres across the West Bank and Gaza. As it is the only charitable provider of eye care, the importance of the hospital for the region cannot be overstated.

Their facilities are internationally recognised as operating to the highest standards. St John Eye Hospital recently became the first East Jerusalem hospital to be awarded the three-year Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation. *JCI is a US-based organisation that has established patient safety and quality service standards for health facilities worldwide.*

St. John Eye Hospital has a large outpatients department, specialist eye units, operating theatres and 24-hour eye emergency services. Their School of Nursing is the envy of many hospitals, and the Outreach programme goes from strength to strength, reaching a further 20,000 patients that would otherwise not be able to benefit.

With high rates of poverty in the region, it is essential that they continue to make their services available to all.

**In 2023, the SJEHG  
reached 135,293  
outpatients**



## We can make a real difference

The donations that you make, really have an impact!

The donations from the Knights Templar add up and we are one of the largest continuous donors to the Eye Hospital – the largest being the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem.

**Your donations literally save sight and change lives.** Palestinians are 10 times more likely to go blind than in the west. Access to eye care, poverty, and genetics are all factors in increasing the likelihood of preventable blindness in this group.

Over the next couple of pages, you can see the major causes of blindness and visual impairment in the Holy Land as well as the factors that contribute to it.

**80%** of blindness in this region is curable but most will not have access to care without help.



## We have a history

Over 1,000 years ago, the Knights Hospitallers established a hospital on the site of the current Muristan Clinic. The history of the Order of the Hospitaller Knights, beginning in Jerusalem, has historical records identifying a hospice within the city walls in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century where the Knights were able to accommodate over 1,000 patients.



**It is needed and it matters**

**52%**

of the income received in 2023 was from donations

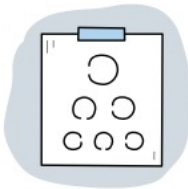
# Main causes of blindness and visual impairment in Palestine

**80%** of blindness in this region is curable



Based on the key findings from the 2018-2019 National Survey of Avoidable Blindness, Diabetic Retinopathy, and Disability in Palestine (RAAB) conducted by SJEHG, the following are the main causes of blindness and visual impairment amongst the population we serve.

# Contributing factors to blindness and visual impairment in Palestine



Poor access to eye care resulting from physical, financial and knowledge barriers



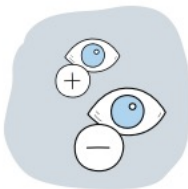
Poverty and unemployment



Poor quality eye care and fragmentation of the health care systems



Socio-economic factors leading to gender inequality



Lack of prevention

Based on the key findings from the 2018-2019 National Survey of Avoidable Blindness, Diabetic Retinopathy, and Disability in Palestine (RAAB) conducted by SJEHG, the following are the main causes of blindness and visual impairment amongst the population we serve.



# The work



*London*  
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# The work

– based on statistics for 2023

The SJEHG provides eye care which is of the highest quality, accessible and patient centred.

## Jerusalem Hospital

The Jerusalem hospital is a large, modern facility that includes outpatient departments, specialist retinal, corneal, glaucoma, orthoptic and paediatric units, has a nursing school, operating theatres and 24-hour emergency services. It is the first Palestinian hospital to receive JCI accreditation and has done so repeatedly since 2013. It treated 51,537 patients and performed 3,343 major operations. It has 111 medical, allied health professionals and nurses amongst a total staff of 180.

## Muristan Clinic

Situated in the 'Old City' of Jerusalem, it saw 833 patients in it's screening programme.

## Anabta Clinic

Treated 11,316 outpatients and performed 25 major operations with 16 staff and now provides access to one million residents. The centre provides primary and secondary care

with specialist care in paediatrics and diabetic related eye diseases.

## Hebron Hospital

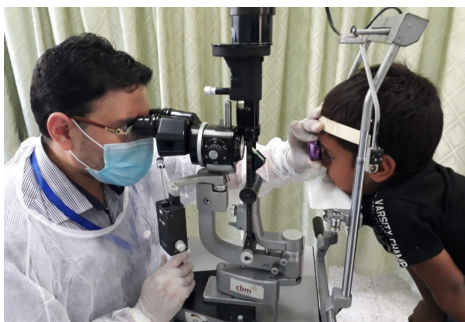
The hospital provides sight-saving treatments such as cataract, laser eye and retinal surgery to treat diabetic retinopathy and serves a population of 690,000. It saw 13,071 patients and performed 573 major operations with 19 staff members.

## Gaza Hospital

In one of the most densely populated regions of the world, the hospital is working in near-emergency conditions, yet to the same high standard as the main hospital. It provides specialised ophthalmic subspeciality services including retinal, glaucoma, anterior segment, paediatric and oculoplastic. Up until October 2023, it treated 30,559 outpatients and performed 2,025 major operations. It has 45 staff.

## Mobile Services (Gaza) and Outreach

The Gaza outreach programme reached over 3,500 patients. The Mobile Outreach Programme and the new Kufor Aqab Outreach Clinic treated 18,472 outpatients.



*[Far Left]*  
Consultation

*[Left]* London Support visiting the operating theatres in Jerusalem.

A portrait of Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali, a middle-aged man with dark hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark blue tie with a pattern of red and white crosses and a white star. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage and a tree trunk.

# The people



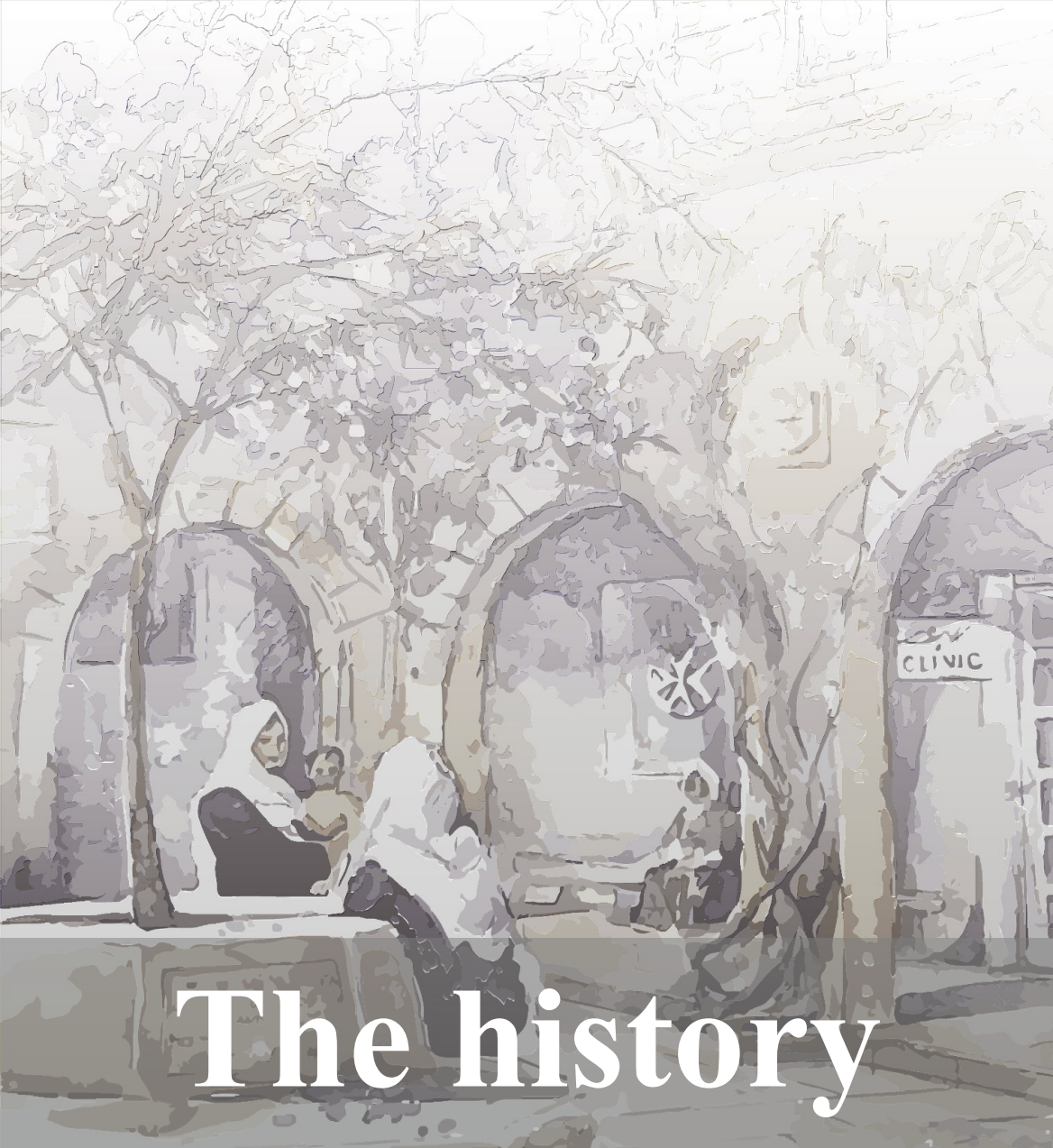
Dr Ahmad Ma'ali  
CEO of SJEHG

# The people

Across all areas of the group, the commitment of the staff is simply outstanding.

Something that strikes everybody who gets to visit the Eye Hospital is the dedication of the whole staff family. Over many visits, London Support has built a rapport with staff including those in the clinical, medical and surgical teams, catering, communications, facilities, finance, HR, security and theatres and the nurses who run the clinics. We have seen first-hand, how the Eye Hospital staff feel like a true family often with a tradition of service across generations.





# The history



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# The history – and beyond

The current Muristan clinic is situated on the site of the first hospital, established a thousand years ago by the Knights Hospitaller. Since then, the region has undergone immense political and religious upheaval.

In Britain, the Order of St. John, which traced its origins back to the Knights Hospitaller, was dissolved during the reformation in 1564. However, Queen Victoria in 1882 issued a Royal Charter rekindling the Order. At the time, ‘trachoma’ was one of the greatest causes of blindness and building an Eye Hospital in Jerusalem provided a cause and a focus for the Order, and so it became the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem.

A new hospital was built near Mount Zion and later rebuilt at its present location and added a new clinic in Muristan where the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim quarters of the Old City meet.

The hospital in Gaza was established in 1992 to meet a growing need for eye care and is looking to expand its surgical care and children’s screening services over the coming years; in 2016 it moved to its new building. The Hebron Hospital was opened in 2005 and moved to its new building in 2016. The group now operates across 6 different sites.

***The SJEHG has trained more than 200 eye nurses (almost 100% of all specialist eye nurses trained in Palestine) and 50 eye doctors (40% of those trained).***



[Above] The hospital with its two towers c1890



[Above] The hospital in Jerusalem

Anabta Clinic

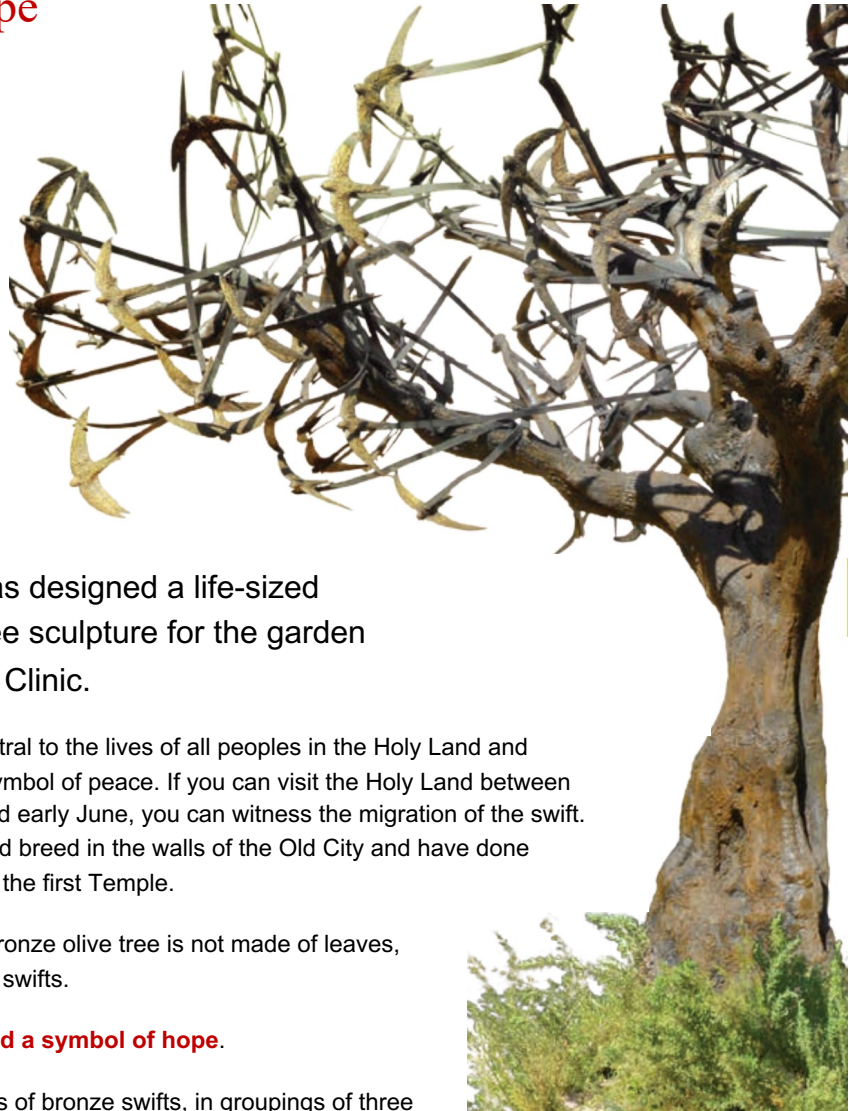


Hebron Hospital



Gaza Hospital

## Tree of Hope



Mark Coreth has designed a life-sized bronze olive tree sculpture for the garden of the Muristan Clinic.

The olive tree is central to the lives of all peoples in the Holy Land and is often used as a symbol of peace. If you can visit the Holy Land between the end of March and early June, you can witness the migration of the swift. Some swifts nest and breed in the walls of the Old City and have done so since the days of the first Temple.

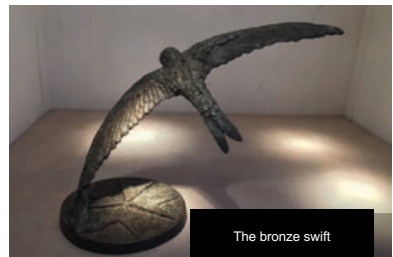
The canopy of the bronze olive tree is not made of leaves, but of 150 migrating swifts.

**A tree full of life and a symbol of hope.**

There are also flights of bronze swifts, in groupings of three that tell of the three faiths and of the hope of unity, positioned around the Muristan and throughout the hospitals and clinics within the SJEHG.

The recent 20 for 2020 swift appeal by the Knights Templar across the Order, raised a further £80,677 for the SJEHG.

A bronze swift presented to the Province of London in recognition of its contribution to the Eye Hospital



The bronze swift

# 2023 Facts and Figures

In 2023  
SJEHG reached  
**135,293**  
Patients

SJEHG performed  
**5,966**  
Major surgeries

Kufor Aqab  
**7,300**  
Outpatients treated

Muristan Clinic  
**850**  
Patients screened

Gaza Hospital  
**31,000**  
Outpatients treated



Anabta Clinic  
**11,300**  
Outpatients treated

Jerusalem Hospital  
**51,500**  
Patients treated

Hebron Hospital  
**13,000**  
Patients seen

Mobile Outreach  
**11,000**  
Patients screened





**St John of Jerusalem  
Eye Hospital Group**

For more information on the work of the  
St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group  
please contact:



<https://londonknightstemplar.com/sjehg-london-supporter-network/>

[siehgsupport@londonknightstemplar.com](mailto:siehgsupport@londonknightstemplar.com)

This booklet has been put together by London Support, the central resource of  
SJEHG information for Knights in the Province of London.  
Updated May 2024