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## **Knights Templar**

### **St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital: March 2021 update**

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Dear Brother Knights,

My name is Trishna and I am so pleased to have joined St John Eye Hospital Group as their new Fundraising Officer. There has been much change in the London team in the last year, but we are delighted to have a full team in place as of 2021. Our London team consists of Rebecca van der Westhuizen (Interim Director of Fundraising), Charlie O'Doherty (Trusts and Philanthropy Officer) and Kinga Burger (Finance and Administration Manager). We are also pleased to welcome our new Communications Officer Roshi Thevasagayam this month

#### **2020 Overview**

The global pandemic in 2020 presented a set of unique challenges to the hospital. The number of outpatients who were seen by the hospital in 2020 fell to 101,974 compared to 137,000 in 2019. Additionally, 5,707 patients underwent major surgery in 2020 compared to 5,734 in 2019.

Due to lockdown restrictions and limited access to the hospital, patient income fell by almost £1 million. The pandemic also created challenges for our loyal supporters, which meant that voluntary income fell by nearly £300,000 against the 2020 annual operational budget. To mitigate this loss of income, SJEHG introduced measures that reduced the Group's expenditure by almost £2.5 million of which £600,000 savings were made in payroll costs. Payroll savings were a result of unpaid leave taken by all our staff, freezes to recruitment and permanent changes to contracts for particular staff (to part-time hours). Despite our cost saving measures, the Hospital Group has maintained its commitment to quality care and has ensured patients and staff remain safe.

We are deeply thankful to our donors, especially the Knights Templar, for their continued support. Thankfully, voluntary income did not fall to a level as originally anticipated in early March 2020, and this is down to the incredible generosity of our donors. We owe our sincerest gratitude to you for supporting us in what could have been a far more challenging year.

#### **COVID-19 update**

Israel was the first country in the Middle East to start vaccinations on 17th December. Almost 700,000 Israelis received the Pfizer vaccine by the end of December. All staff at the East Jerusalem Hospital have received the two Pfizer vaccines, under the Israeli Ministry of Health the staff in the West Bank fall under the Palestinian Authority (PA) and have also received two Sputnik vaccines. The staff in the west bank and Gaza are in the process of getting their Sputnik V vaccines.



## St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group

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The Lord Vestey KCVO, DL  
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**Hospitaller**  
Mr David Verity OStJ

In February 2021 Gaza experienced a spike in COVID-19 cases, there are additional restrictions in movement and we hope that our staff will receive the vaccine without delay to protect them as they treat patients.

The safety of our patients and staff still remains pivotal at this time and safety measures are being fully adhered to. There hasn't been any cross infection within the hospital and thanks to support from the WHO and EU/welfare we have an adequate supply of PPE for the next few months.

A third lockdown was enforced in Israel for almost 6 weeks, which ended in early February 2021. Restrictions have been eased but a fourth lockdown is predicted soon. Elections are due to take place in Israel and the government is keen to open the airports to ensure all citizens have the right to vote. In PA controlled areas there was no lockdown, with the exception of areas with high COVID-19 cases. Weekend restrictions are still in place.

### The St John Eye Hospital Group

Between January to February this year, 20,083 outpatients were seen by the group. This is down 7% compared to the same period in 2020 (pre-COVID 19).

There were 1,107 major eye operations performed in January and February this year, which is merely 4% less than the same period a year ago (pre COVID 19). The group also performed 160 major paediatric surgeries, which is 20% less than the same period of 2020.

At the Anabta Centre, there has been an 8 % reduction in clinical activities at the Centre compared to the same period a year ago.

At the Gaza Hospital outpatient clinical activities have remained steady and at the same level as 2020 (pre COVID19). There were 27 more cataract surgeries performed in comparison to the previous year and 38 less surgeries than the same period of 2020.

There has been a 24% increase in outpatients' activities in Hebron and almost an 18% increase in surgical activities, compared to the same period of last year.

### Thank you

In closing, we are indebted to the Knights Templar for its exceptional support over the years. Your support has allowed us to remain hopeful and rise to the unique challenges we face. We hope that you will continue to support the work of the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group and we look forward to keeping you updated on our work.

Wishing you good health and safety.

Kind regards,

Trishna Datta  
Fundraising Officer  
St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital

**ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM  
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Saving Sight  
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