



London  
**SUPPORT**

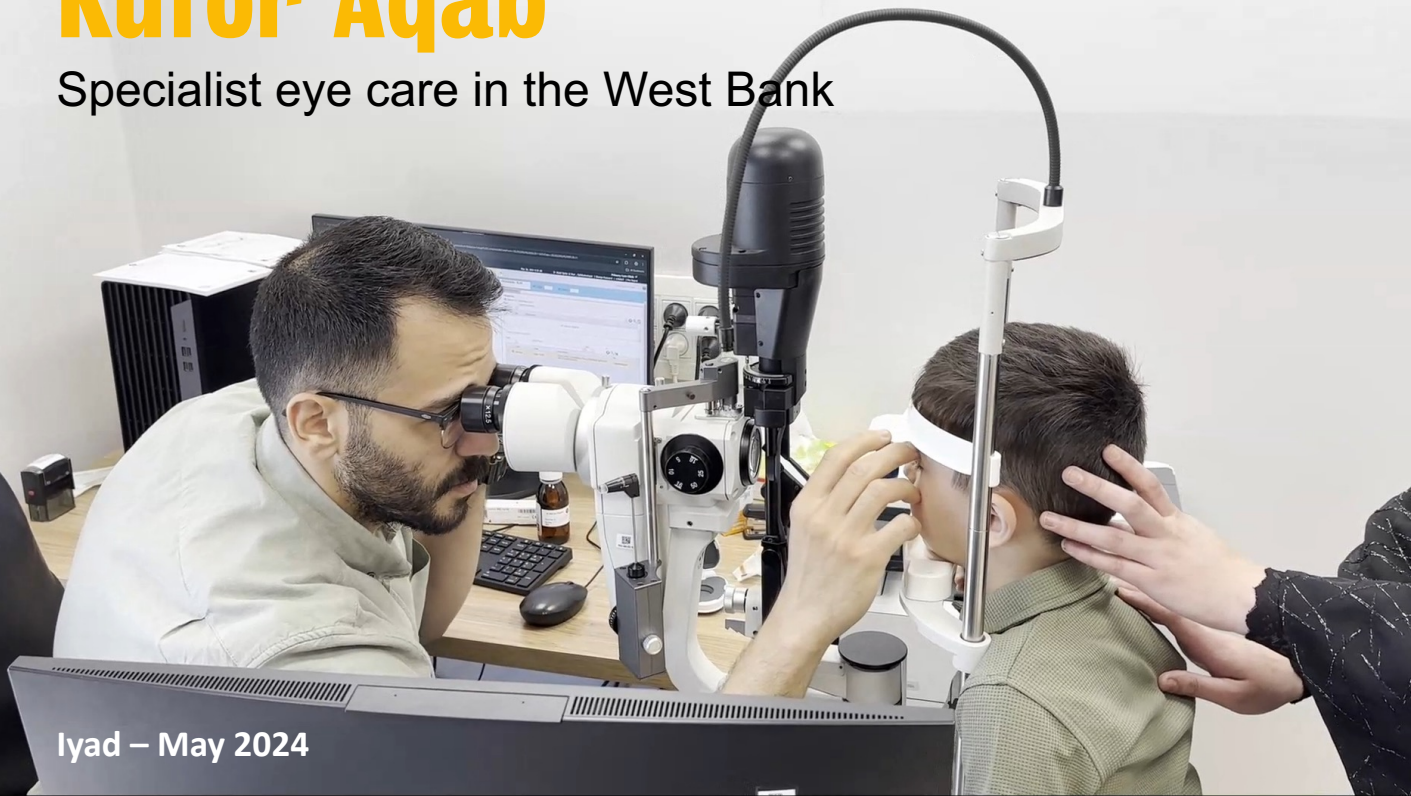
# Kufor Aqab Centre

May 2024 – Vernon King

May 2024

## Kufor Aqab

Specialist eye care in the West Bank



Iyad – May 2024

Back in September 2023, as part of London Support, I was able to visit Kufor Aqab for the first time and see the work being done at, what was then, a relatively new centre. As part of the SJEHG Strategy Plan, it has continued to grow and and now provides a full range of primary care outpatient clinics, preparations for surgery, retinal and corneal imaging and some specialist treatment including eye injections for macula oedema.

In its first year, 2023, it saw a total of 7,263 outpatients of which 4,915 were children. With donations from Knights Templar among others, it has been able to increase its capacity and its range of services. It already looks like the total number of patients seen in 2024 will exceed those seen in 2023.

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Between 01/01/2024 and 26/05/2024 the outreach clinic has already seen a total of

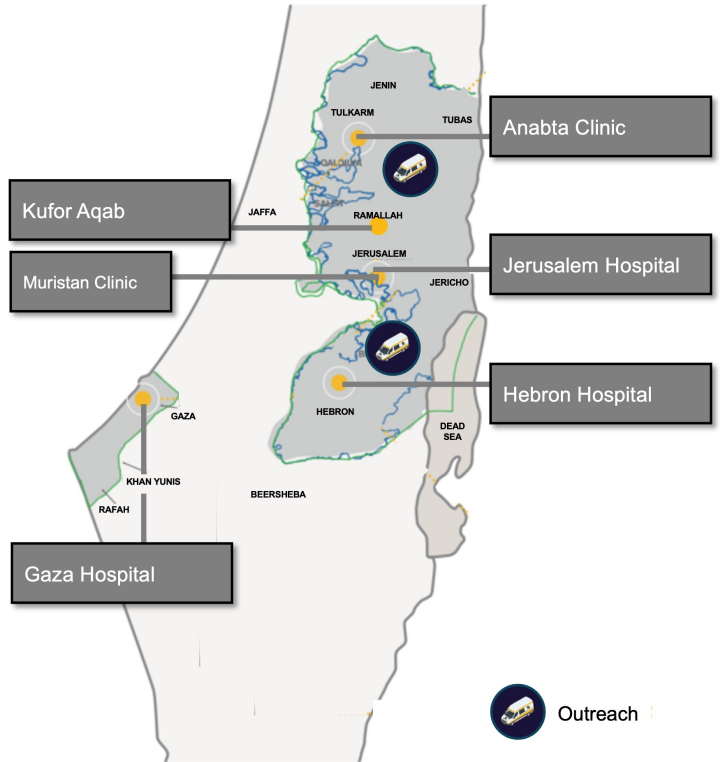
**4,211** patients

30% of which are new cases.



St John of Jerusalem  
Eye Hospital Group

Situated in East Jerusalem but across the Separation Wall, it serves a population that suffers from all the contributing factors that lead to blindness and visual impairment.



The Province of Hampshire and Isle of Wight had gifted £20,000 to the Eye Hospital and in accordance with the wishes of the Province and with the assistance of London Support, it was possible to allocate this donation towards the Outreach Clinic at Kufor Aqab. Rev'd Niall Johnston was able to deliver the good news to Malek Ebreitem, the Nurse in Charge, at our visit last year.



Sept 2023



Rev'd Niall Johnston delivering the good news of the donation from Hampshire and IoW to Malek Ebreitem (Sept 2023)

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In May 2024, along with Rev'd Niall Johnston, I was able to again visit the clinic, to talk to some of the patients, nurses and doctors and to see the progress that has been made.



Discussing the updates and patient numbers with the staff in May 2024



The new Nurse in Charge, Suzanna Majaj, was very pleased to be able to show us the recent plaque thanking the Knights of the Province of Hampshire and Isle of Wight for their support.

The following page provides a breakdown of various patient categories relating to the numbers of patients that were seen between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 and 26<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

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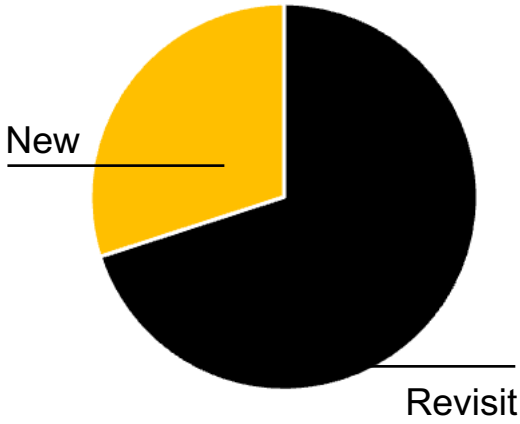
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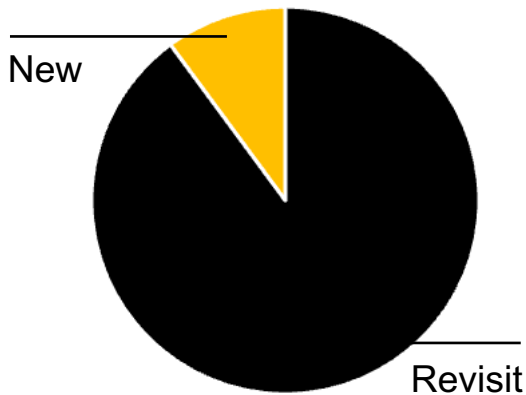
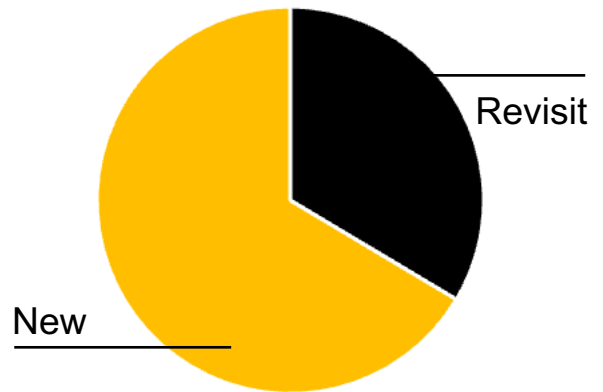
## 4,211

The number of patients seen between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 26<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

In any Outpatient clinic, the number of patients returning for continued treatment is high [2,948], but Kufor Aqab also sees an increasing number of “New” patients who are coming to the clinic for the first time [1,263].

## Children under 2

When this breakdown is applied to children under 2 that attended the clinic, the percentage represented by new cases rises considerably



## Patients over 60

A large part of the treatment is ongoing. In certain conditions e.g. cataracts, the patient may have both eyes affected and following the successful treatment for one, patients are likely to return for further treatment to the other affected eye.

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Whilst we were there lyad, a 4 year old boy, came into the clinic. He had poor vision that had been identified at a screening programme. We were kindly given permission to follow lyad's progress during his visit through the clinic.



Following Registration (1), lyad went for a more detailed vision screening test (2 and 3).



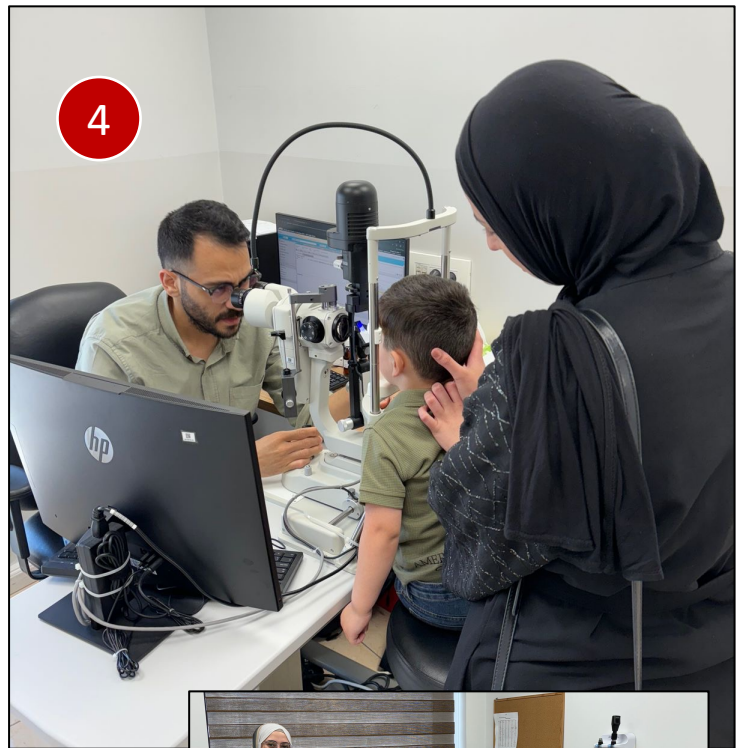
Suzanna helps lyad to complete further eye examinations with the optometrist using a refraction machine. (3)



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Other doctors perform further examination tests through a slit lamp (4). Iyad was found to have astigmatism and was prescribed glasses which will improve his sight considerably.



Iyad – May 2024



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Iyad was referred to the Kufor Aqab clinic for examination and treatment. He was fortunate as his parents, although Palestinian, qualified for Israeli Health Insurance (Blue Card).

In this case, the payment made for the screening, examinations and prescriptions is 20 ILS\* and this is paid at the clinic. The cost of any ongoing treatment and the glasses will be paid by the insurance company.

In many instances, the patients are not in a financial position to pay for the treatment in full. Often, the treatment may cost much more than a month's salary.

Many patients are already struggling but they try to contribute what they can, with the hospital charity function picking up the rest. There were many examples during our visit. One patient has an income of 1,600 ILS pcm but the cost to treat his daughter was a total of around 2,000 ILS. He was able to pay 300 ILS, the rest is made up from the hospital. He has 9 children.

Another patient has an income of 1,000 ILS pcm, Two of his children are at school and two help him to run his family business though they are below 18. He paid 200 ILS for treatment for one son and the total cost is likely to be around 1,800 ILS.

## What's next?

Space is at a premium. On the same floor of the building, an owner of an adjacent space to the clinic (right), allows the Eye Hospital to make temporary use of a small area as a waiting room for patients and their family.



\* The exchange rate when visiting in May 2024 is £1.00 = 4.45 ILS

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To facilitate an eye examination, all patients have drops placed into their eyes which cause the pupil to dilate to its maximum opening allowing the optometrist and doctor to examine it fully. This is uncomfortable (particularly for children), causes blurred vision and can last for a few hours.

The type of waiting area mentioned is needed for parents to console their children before examination or for adults to wait until the effects of the drops wear off so they can travel home safely. If additional space can be found, then this can be equipped with a small play area and additional seating.

We are returning again in September and very much hope to be able to visit the clinic once more and to see the dedication of the team that bring specialist eye care into the West Bank, saving sight and changing lives.

**E. Kt. Vernon King** P.Gt. W. of R.  
Provincial Vice-Chancellor (London)

London Support with  
Suzanna Majaj, Nurse in  
Charge, Kufor Aqab



St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is the only charitable provider of expert eye care in the Holy Land and has hospitals, clinics and outreach services in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. For over 140 years they have been treating patients regardless of ethnicity, religion or the ability to pay.