

From: Harriet Wheeler

**Executive Head of UK Office**

**St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital**

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Dear Supporters,

Hostilities in Gaza and Israel have continued for the past 10 months with an increased number of casualties. It is reported that more than 38,500 people have been killed and 89,000 injured in the Gaza Strip. It is also reported that 1,500 Israelis have been killed with more than 5,400 injured since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The two parties (Israel and Hamas) have failed to reach a ceasefire agreement. Israeli forces have continued with a land incursion in Rafah City and the surrounding areas and as a result the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt has been closed for the past 2 months. There are reports that military activities have extended to Khan Younis (middle of Gaza Strip).

The SJEHG emergency medical intervention has continued despite the escalation in hostilities in Rafah and surrounding areas. We continue to provide primary eye care and basic public health services at 4 locations in the south, middle and north of Gaza.

Over the past month our team treated more than 2500 patients, and more than 10,000 patients have received treatment since April 2024. We have been able to undertake minor lid surgeries at one of our sites located in the north of the Gaza Strip.

We have managed to secure sufficient medical supplies locally and we are delighted to learn that our shipment of medical equipment and medications has reached Gaza City through the Jordanian- Israeli Humanitarian Corridor. However, we have not yet been able to transport this to the south where we have a secure storage facility.

With a very well-established phase one of our intervention, we are keen to move to phase two in the next few weeks. This will focus on the prevention of blindness and treatment of Diabetic Retinopathy and will start as soon as we are able to transport refrigerated medications across the border. We are in discussion with the International Medical Corps (IMC) to establish a clinic at their field Hospital to administer intravitreal injections as well as laser treatments.

As for our staff, most who were residing in Rafah City have now moved to Deir El Balah (middle of the Gaza Strip) and remain unharmed. The Hospital has continued to pay staff despite all challenges.

For detailed information on the current Gaza crisis, please refer to the latest update on the website of the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website- <https://www.ochaopt.org/crisis>

The security situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem remains fragile with sporadic incidents and violence mainly in the northern districts. Our outpatient clinical activities in Jerusalem continue at 95% capacity where most of the outpatients are from the Jerusalem

district. As for surgery, the Jerusalem Hospital operates at almost 85% capacity as compared to the prewar period.

At the Hebron Hospital, clinical activities have been sustained at almost 98% capacity with an increased number of surgeries performed at the Hospital every week.

Outreach services including the child vision screening project are progressing very well with an increased number of patients screened and referred, especially from refugee camps.

To date, more than 47,000 children have been screened by the 3 teams across the WB refugee camps as well as in East Jerusalem. Almost 20% of those screened needed referrals for further examinations, diagnostic procedures, and surgeries at our Group's facilities.

Bulletins will continue to be published on our website

<https://www.stjohnehospital.org/israel-gaza-hostilities-weekly-bulletin/> where you can also find out information about our [Emergency Appeal](#).

As always, with warmest wishes and our sincere thanks for all that you do.

Best wishes

Harriet

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