

# SEEING BEYOND THE CONFLICT IN GAZA – A SPECIAL EDITION OF THE JERUSALEM SCENE

SJEHG launches the  
biggest ever appeal in  
its 140-year history

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*CEO Update:*

*The impacts of the Gaza conflict and snapshot of 2024*



St John of Jerusalem  
Eye Hospital Group

# JERUSALEM SCENE

Spring 2024  
Treatment for all regardless of  
ethnicity, religion, or ability to pay



*The SJEHG team pictured at the Rafah treatment centre, April 2024*

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**YOUR SUPPORT  
KEEPS OUR VITAL  
SIGHT-SAVING  
SERVICES RUNNING**

# CEO UPDATE: THE IMPACTS OF THE GAZA CONFLICT AND SNAPSHOT OF 2024



DR AHMAD MA'ALI KStJ, PhD, MPH, BSN  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**W**elcome to the Spring edition of the Jerusalem Scene! I want to start by expressing my thanks as always for your continued support. Since my last update in December, SJEHG has celebrated some significant achievements, but has also encountered major challenges.

The war in Gaza has been ongoing for the past seven months, leading to a tragic increase in casualties. It is reported that more than 33,000 people have lost their lives and 70,000 have been injured in the Gaza Strip. It is also reported that 1,200 Israelis have been killed with more than 6,400 injured since October 7th 2023.

Hostilities have now escalated with the commencement of a land incursion into Rafah. Most of the conflict is now centred in the southern regions, where some 1.2 million displaced people are residing.

Amid the ongoing conflict and in the absence of a ceasefire, we have finalised our plans to provide essential medical interventions in Gaza. Initially, we aim to treat 250 patients a day, focusing on delivering primary eye care to refugees in the southern and central parts of the Gaza Strip. Our long-term goal is to rebuild our hospital in Gaza by the end of the year. To learn more about our efforts, please turn to page 6.

The security situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem remains fragile with sporadic incidents occurring daily. This has, of course, curtailed the movement of staff and patients from the West Bank to the Jerusalem Hospital.

Across the Group more than 36,000 patients were treated in the first quarter of 2024, of which over 40% were children and close to 1000 major eye surgeries were performed.

Both our outpatient clinical and surgical activities in Jerusalem continue at 75% of normal levels, while, at the Kufor Aqab Clinic, demand has exceeded pre-war levels.

In Hebron, clinical activities have been sustained at almost 95% capacity with more and more surgeries performed every week.

Outreach services as well as the child vision screening projects are progressing very well with an increased number of patients screened and referred.

To date, more than 20,000 children have been screened by three teams in refugee camps in the West Bank.

In line with the Group's guiding mission to improve access to quality eye care and deliver services to those most in need, we are due to start renovating the Nablus day hospital. This comprehensive facility will provide both outpatient and surgical services to residents of the northern districts, particularly refugees, and should be ready to welcome patients by the end of this year.

We are well aware that the coming period may bring further challenges to our important work, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to delivering essential eye care services to the most impoverished populations in the Holy Land regardless of religion, race, social class, or ability to pay.

Once again, and on behalf of all our staff, I would like to thank all our supporters for your continued and unwavering support during these uncertain times. Your prayers and words of encouragement have kept our staff going through all manner of challenges.

I look forward to reporting good news in the coming months.

It is reported that more than

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Pictured: Inside, Nablus Day-Care Hospital

# A NEW VISION FOR EYE CARE IN THE WEST BANK

**D**espite months of conflict and turmoil in the Holy Land, our hospital and clinics in the West Bank remain critical in delivering essential eyecare to a population of 1.2 million people.

Since the start of the war in Gaza, restrictions on travel across cities and major roads in the West Bank have significantly hindered patient access to medical care and treatment in Jerusalem.

This has particularly affected those with severe eye conditions like diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma, as well as children in need of ongoing treatment to avoid vision loss.

Patient numbers in Jerusalem fell to about 30% of normal levels, with only a slightly higher rate in the West Bank.

The uncertainty of the early months of the conflict led the Group to prepare for worst-case scenarios projecting major financial losses that could jeopardise its ability to continue providing its life-changing services.

While we did not know what was going to unfold, we knew that our role as the region's single largest provider of expert eye care was more important than ever.

## Overcoming adversity – serving patients amid conflict

Emergency assistance from Johanniter International, along with close collaboration among hospital staff enabled the swift expansion of services in the West Bank. This ensured that patients received immediate access to safe and effective care while providing employment for hospital staff.

The hospital's mobile outreach team, operational since 1986, travelled daily to deliver services to those most in need, while patients requiring specialised treatments were referred to our hospital in Hebron and clinic in Kufor Aqab. To meet demand, additional staff were brought in from across the Group.

In a matter of weeks, while the hospital in Jerusalem saw a decline in patient numbers, demand at Kufor Aqab and Hebron soared to unprecedented levels, eventually exceeding pre-conflict numbers.

As the region now tentatively looks towards recovery, SJEHG is planning a permanent expansion of essential services in the West Bank.

*Talking about the expansion, SJEHG's CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali says "Our goal is to offer quality eye care to those who need it most but can't come to us.*

*"To fulfil this aim we are permanently expanding the clinic at Kufor Aqab as well as establishing a new outreach service and hospital in the north.*

*"Our commitment to serving the people of this region has never wavered.*

*"As we continue to navigate through these challenging times, these services and facilities will provide a safe and comfortable space for residents of the West Bank to access general and subspecialty services without the need to travel to Jerusalem."*

*Gandy Modyeh, Outpatients Department Manager, added, "Ongoing uncertainties in the West Bank underscore the pressing need to permanently strengthen our regional clinics to cope with extraordinary circumstances like these.*

*"Our plan at Kufor Aqab includes taking on more space, acquiring additional equipment like lasers and visual field machines, establishing more subspecialty clinics and bringing in more staff."*



### *Plans for expansion in the West Bank*

- Opening of a new day-care hospital in Nablus – for the first time this will mean patients in the northern West Bank have access to surgery without the need to travel to Jerusalem
- Continuing subspecialty services at Kufor Aqab ensuring ongoing specialised care for patients
- Introducing general anaesthetic at Hebron enhancing the scope of medical treatments available
- Implementing a new outreach service in Nablus expanding our reach and accessibility to communities in need

### *Spotlight on Nablus*

- The only charitable provider of expert eye care for children and adults in the northern West Bank
- The first time such surgical treatments will be available in the region
- Patient-centred and fully accessible
- Includes two fully equipped operation rooms, a general and paediatric clinic, and dedicated day-care ward
- Anticipating a 50% increase in existing service levels, treating some 10,000 children as outpatients, and performing 250-300 surgeries each year.



*Nablus Day-Care Hospital*

**In 2023 we treated over  
43,000  
people in the West  
Bank, of which over  
25%  
were children**



*81 year-old Khader Dar Taha attending his appointment at Kufor Aqab on 17th April 2024.*

### *Meet Khader Dar Taha, an 81-year-old patient at Kufor Aqab.*

**K**hader Dar Taha, from the village of Qattana near Jerusalem, first visited the eye hospital in 2017 with blurry vision and a strange sensation in his eyes preventing him from his work as a farmer.

After receiving a diagnosis of cataracts in his left eye, he underwent successful treatment bringing significant improvements to his sight.

However, a year later, he experienced severe pain and sight loss in his right eye leading to a vision rating of 6/190 – at 6 metres, Khader could see only what someone with normal vision can at 190 metres – which is enough to class him legally blind in some countries.

Despite a high risk of infection, he underwent a corneal transplant and, thanks to the diligent care and treatment at Kufor Aqab, his vision and quality of life improved substantially.

Even with increased movement restrictions in the West Bank after the Hamas-Israel war and while receiving treatment for colon cancer and other health conditions, Khader continued to keep his appointments.

He expresses immense gratitude to the team at Kufor Aqab for all their hard work and help which restored his sight, and regularly encourages his friends and relatives to also go for check-ups to prevent avoidable blindness.



SJEGH staff treating a young boy at Rafah, April 2024

# GAZA: AN OPHTHALMIC EMERGENCY

**T**his month the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital is officially launching the largest ever emergency appeal in its 140-year history.

Over the next 12 months we must urgently raise £6m to reestablish vital eye care facilities in conflict torn Gaza.

Our staff on the ground are starting to assess the eye care needs and provide care to people who have been trapped in the war zone for more than seven months.

"Hearing the terrible circumstances from our teams on the ground I cannot emphasize enough just how important this Appeal is. I know I can count on our network of supporters to understand the urgency and make this a success" says Sir Andrew Cash, SJEGH Chairman.

Speaking about the launch Dr Ahmed Maali, SJEGH CEO, said: "Anyone following the news these past few months, will need little introduction to the desperate situation going on in Gaza.

"Since the start of the war, children, women, and men, who through no fault of their own, have found themselves without even the most basic of human needs.

"That includes access to sight-saving treatment, which is why we need to get our facilities back up and running as quickly as possible so that we can fulfil our guiding mission: Saving Sight, Changing Lives.

"There are obviously going to be so many competing demands over the next few months as 2.3 million ordinary



SJEGH's hospital in Gaza City having sustained collateral bomb damage



Gazans look to rebuild their homes, schools, businesses, and infrastructure.

“But the most urgent of these is rebuilding shattered lives traumatised by war; after all, it is hard to look to a future if you cannot see.”

Even before the conflict, as the single largest provider of eyecare in the territory, we treated an average of 40,000 people and performed 3,000 surgical treatments every year in Gaza.

That work was suspended as our staff on the ground sought refuge from the fighting. The result is not only a mounting backlog of patients but many more now in need of treatment, either from injury or disease.

In a region where over 69,000 people are either blind or living with the early onset of sight loss, tens of thousands more could be on track to lose their sight.

This emergency response will mean delivering primary and secondary services, resupplying the region with medical supplies and equipment, and repairing damage to our hospital, which, although plundered and sustaining collateral bomb damage, is still standing.

It is being overseen by the team in Jerusalem and three project coordinators on the ground.

During phase 1 of the response, each coordinator will supervise a mobile treatment station in the middle and south of Gaza. 16 staff from the hospital group, who have volunteered, will provide patient care. Daily security assessments will be conducted to ensure the safety of staff.

In the meantime, our work in the West Bank and East Jerusalem must go on. Outreach levels hit record levels in 2023 and we have plans to further improve access to care and treatment in 2024.

In collaboration with partners such as the World Health Organisation, UNRWA, the Palestinian Red Crescent, and support from the Fred Hollows Foundation and CBM International, hospital staff are now in the early weeks of a phased reintroduction of eye health services in Gaza.

We know firsthand the profound impact of saving a person's sight – from an improved quality of life, greater social inclusion and access to more opportunities, through to better mental health, reduced dependency, and greater social inclusion.

**Now, as the main provider of eye care in Gaza, our work is more vital than ever.**



The SJEHG team at Nusreiat. Pictured, from left to right: Fadi Ijleh, Dr. Hisham Al Falit, Walid Shaqoura, Suhad Diab (Optometrist), Maysoon Dabban (Nurse), Ibrahim Baaloosha (Nurse).



SJEHG staff treating Gazan man at Nuseirat, April 2024

**SAVING SIGHT  
IN GAZA APPEAL**



# A BEACON OF HOPE

Rebuilding Gaza's shattered healthcare system



## PHASE 1 : 3 - 6 months

Mobile screening and primary eye care treatment

- Location: Nuseirat Camp, Rafah and Deir al Balah
- Partners: UNRWA, UK Meds, Palestinian Red Crescent Society
- Eye care needs assessment

Cost £530,000

Gaza Hospital

Nuseirat Camp

Deir al Balah

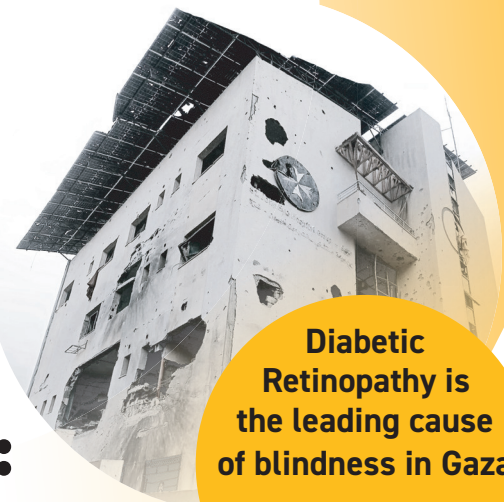
Rafah

## PHASE 2 : 6 - 9 months

High-impact medical intervention focusing on treatment of diabetic retinopathy and preventable blindness

- Semi-static venues
- Partners: PRCS and International Medical Corps

Cost £495,000



Diabetic Retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in Gaza

15% of Gazans have diabetes

## PHASE 3 : 12 months

Rehabilitation of SJHEG hospital and provision of surgical services

- Establish new supply chain
- Partners: Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, Nepal
- Obtain JCI accreditation standards

Cost £4.7million



# BUDGET

## Gaza Emergency Response

Equipment	£2.1m
Medication & Surgical supplies for 1yr	£1.6m
Rebuild hospital	£1.6m
Staffing costs	£1.3m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6m</b>

**£20,000**

could provide enough antibiotic drops to treat 2,000 people

**£10,000**

could buy an Operating Table for the hospital in Gaza

**£3,000**

could buy an electric generator needed to power a treatment station during phase 1

Nuseirat Camp

Deir al Balah

Rafah

**£100**

could provide medication for 11 patients with glaucoma

**£1,000**

could buy a child's vision testing kit used to assess the state of a child's eyesight

**£50**

could provide 3 Avastine injections to help low vision loss in patients with diabetes or age-related macular degeneration

**£20**

could provide enough ointment for 6 patients with eye inflammation

Gaza Hospital



*Pictured left to right: SJEHG's CEO, Dr Ahmad Ma'ali, SJEHG Trustee John Macaskill, Bridget A. Macaskill, former St John Kenya CEO, Harun Gikera, OGW, OSTJ*



### The Priory of England and the Islands

The SJEHG is supported by several hardworking fundraising groups across the Priory of England and the Islands. County Priory Groups (CPGs), the St John Fellowship, the Commanderies of

Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man and the Commandry of the Ards (Northern Island), all raise vital funds towards hospital staff salaries, medical equipment, and emergency appeals. Volunteers organise events, collections at church ceremonies, sponsored walks and more. To everyone involved in fundraising in England and the Islands, thank you for your commitment to the SJEHG.



### The Priory of Scotland

St John Scotland was formed in 1947. They support the NHS and provide emergency healthcare services and training across Scotland. St John Scotland currently support our mobile outreach in the West Bank. Thanks to their support, SJEHG teams reached over 11,000 people in 2023

– that's a 40% increase from 2022. They were also the major donor to the SJEHG's Hebron Hospital, which opened in 2015. We would like to thank St John Scotland for their dedication to Hospital's mission, providing life changing ophthalmic care in the Holy Land.



### The Priory of the USA

The Priory of the USA is a key part of the Order of St John, and its main purpose is to fundraise for the SJEHG. The Priory of the USA raised over £2 million in 2023 and is the backbone of many of the SJEHG programmes. They have supported our hospitals in Jerusalem, Gaza and Hebron,

and our clinics in Anabta and Kufor Aqab, alongside mobile outreach, training, teaching and research programs. The Priory also provides substantial donations of equipment to support the work of the Hospitals. The Priory is also supporting our emergency eye care provision in Gaza. Thank you to the Priory of the USA for your outstanding commitment to the Hospital, without which, we simply wouldn't be where we are today.



### The Priory of Canada

The Order of St. John in Canada is the second largest establishment in the Order of St. John, following the Priory of England, and supports the mission of the Order of St. John International. In 2023 the Priory of Canada g donated £70,000 towards the SJEHG. They have

also supported fundraising and professional development events for Eye Hospital staff. Most recently they supported the SOA's MasterClass on Artificial Intelligence, Health and the Eye. Thank you for your critical support, especially at this time of crisis.





### The Priory of Australia

The Priory of Australia provides first aid services and training throughout the country. They are a longstanding, generous supporter of the SJEHG, donating over £110,000 in 2023. To everyone in the Priory of Australia, thank you for your helping us prevent blindness in the Holy Land.



### The Priory of New Zealand

The Priory of New Zealand also provides essential medical services and supports the delivery of emergency care. In 2023 they raised £120,000 for SJEHG, which went towards our sight saving programmes across the Holy Land. We would like to express our deep thanks to

the Priory of New Zealand for everything they do to help us provide expert eye care to those in dire need.



### The Guild

The Guild of the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is an integral part of SJEHG. Established in 1926 and previously known as the Ladies' Linen Guild, the

Guild has a distinguished record of service to the Eye Hospital. Originally set up as a sewing guild for wives of Order Members, enabling them to contribute to the work of St John, the committee has evolved over the years to become the London-based volunteer fundraising group. The Guild raises money for the Hospital by holding fundraising events and other activities. This year the Guild is proudly sponsoring the salaries of nurses in Gaza, supporting our emergency response. From everyone at the Hospital, thank you for your unwavering commitment to saving sight and changing lives.



### Johanniter International

Johanniter International (JOIN) is the partnership of the four

protestant Orders of St John and their national charities, including the SJEHG. JOIN's central office is based in Brussels. They have generously donated to help roll out our three-phase emergency eye care provision in Gaza. We would like to thank JOIN for being one of our most loyal partners, and for assisting us as we aim to urgently rebuild Gaza's shattered healthcare system.



### The Knights Templar

With a relationship going back over 1000 years, the Knights Templar are one of the SJEHG's oldest and most ardent supporters. Like the Order of the St John, the Knights Templar can trace their roots

back to the Middle Ages. Now a branch of the Free Masons, their modern incarnation was first recorded in the eighteenth century. In 2023, the Knights Templar donated a quarter of a million pounds to support the SJEHG. The Knights Templar fund our flagship Jerusalem Hospital's paediatric unit. Members also support the purchasing of essential ophthalmic equipment and sponsor staff salaries. We are immensely grateful for their support, especially at this time of crisis in the Holy Land. Looking to the future, we hope to strengthen our cherished relationship with the Knights Templar.



### The St John Ophthalmic Association

Established in 2015, The St

John Ophthalmic Association (SOA) supports the academic activities of SJEHG. The SOA is a global network comprised of five hubs and ten chapters, led by SJEHG Chief Hospitalier and Moorfields Eye Hospital Ophthalmic surgeon, Mr David Verity. The SOA unites professionals from all walks of life in support of the humanitarian work of the SJEHG. The SOA also organise events like seminars and lectures, and celebratory dinners. Thank you for everything you do to bolster the internationally recognised medical excellence of our hospitals and clinics in Palestine.



### iYouth

iYouth is a group of young professionals and students who promote and support the

SJEHG. Its activities include regional meetings, fundraising activities, and visits to the SJEHG clinics and hospitals in Palestine. Many of iYouth's members are early career doctors and nurses and are committed to the work and vision of the SJEHG. Thank you for your energy, enthusiasm and dedication, you are an essential part of the St John family.

**To learn more about any of these groups or to see how you can get involved with fundraising in your community, please email the Fundraising Officer at [info@stjohnseyehospital.org](mailto:info@stjohnseyehospital.org).**



A photo from Matthew Teller's talk on the 18th of April featuring Matthew Teller and Guild members (from left to right), Georgie Brookes, Harriet Wheeler, Sarah Jane Holden, Kezia Niman and Denise Magauran.

It's been a busy few months in our community. In January, trustee Paul Hackwood visited the SJEHG's sites in Jerusalem and the West Bank. "It's a privilege to be here and to witness the ongoing work", he commented reflecting on his trip, sitting in the courtyard of our flagship hospital in Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem. He went on to say that the provision of life-changing ophthalmic treatment was "simply impressive" in the face of the crisis gripping the Holy Land. We would like to thank Paul for his kind words and for his unwavering commitment to the SJEHG; in these trying times, it means the world. We hope more members of the SJEHG family will be able to visit us on the ground soon.

Meanwhile, in the UK, we've been doing our utmost to raise money for our Emergency Appeal supporting the SJEHG's work in Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank amid this unprecedented crisis. On the 18th of April, the Guild held a fascinating talk by renowned broadcaster, journalist and author, Matthew Teller, at the Brompton Oratory. Teller spoke on his new book- *Nine Quarters of Jerusalem*- positioning Jerusalem through the lens of the people and communities currently living in the Old City. He highlighted often overlooked stories, humanising Jerusalem, and revealing insights often omitted from public view.

The SOA also held a fascinating conference- the second in their Masterclass series- followed by a splendid dinner at the Royal Society of Medicine on April 20th. The Keynote speaker was Professor Geoffrey Hinton, co-winner of the 2018 Turing Prize in Computer Science. Professor Hinton, widely regarded as "the Godfather of Artificial Intelligence", spoke about AI, digital health and the eye. The event was organised in cooperation with the Priory of Canada and the University of Toronto.

We would also like to thank the County Priory of Hampshire for putting on their annual Bishop's Waltham Garden Fair on Sunday 5th May 2024. There were over 60 stalls offering garden goods, craft creations, food, music and much more. It was a wonderful

event raising essential funds for hospital staff salaries. We appreciate your commitment to the Hospital and look forward to next year's fair!

Furthermore, on the 8th of May, the Guild held another talk at the Garrick Club given by Alice Laugher, Lady Ursula Westbury's granddaughter. Ms Laugher spoke of her grandmother's commitment to the Eye Hospital, and a time when she herself visited the Gaza Hospital. Alice praised the dedicated work of SJEHG staff in Gaza, and recounted how locals told her that the hospital was the most trusted in all of Gaza. She also spoke about her UAE-based social business, named "Committed to Good", which works tirelessly to promote women's rights in conflict zones around the world and furthers the Sustainable Development Goals. Thank you, Ms Laugher, for taking the time to speak to us about your incredible work, inspired by Lady Westbury's dedication to improving the world, and your memories of the SJEHG in Gaza.

To learn more about any of these events, or to obtain a recording of Matthew Teller's, Alice Laugher's, and/or Geoffrey Hinton's talks, please contact the Fundraising Officer at [info@stjohnehospital.org](mailto:info@stjohnehospital.org).

Please check <https://www.stjohnehospital.org/events/> for upcoming events.



SOA Talk - Michael Dan presenting swift to Geoffrey Hinton



# PATIENT SUCCESS STORIES



13 year old Mohammad Salameh during a visit to SJEHG's clinic in Anabta.



Mutaz Fawzi Hashasheen, a patient at Anabta

## Meet Mohammad Salameh, a 13 year-old patient at Anabta

Mohammad is a secondary school student living with his parents and four siblings in the Old Askar refugee camp in Nablus. His family is struggling with poverty and face challenging living conditions in one of the region's most densely populated camps.

During a screening at his school, SJEHG staff identified potential eye issues and referred Mohammad, along with several classmates, to the Group's clinic in Anabta for further testing.

The doctor diagnosed Mohammad with allergic conjunctivitis, an inflammation of the conjunctiva caused by an allergic reaction, and prescribed treatment with a follow up visit after one month.

Mohammad's mother was relieved and grateful for the prompt care provided by hospital staff. She had suspected that her son might have an eye problem and was thankful for the early diagnosis and treatment, which helped prevent long-term complications and allowed Mohammad to continue his studies without further difficulties.

## Meet Mutaz Fawzi Hashasheen, a 10-year old patient at Anabta

Mutaz lives in Balata refugee camp, the largest in the northern West Bank, located in Nablus City.

Like Mohammad, SJEHG staff screened Mutaz during a school visit and referred him to the hospital's clinic in Anabta for further tests. He was diagnosed with bilateral astigmatism, a condition affecting both eyes which causes blurry vision, squinting and difficulty seeing at night, as well as retinal dystrophy, an inherited disorder that leads to progressive vision loss and can, in some cases, eventually cause blindness.

To address the astigmatism, Mutaz was prescribed full correction glasses and is scheduled for a follow up visit in six months to determine if further treatment is needed. While retinal dystrophy has no cure, regular monitoring can help manage the condition.

Mutaz's family expressed their gratitude to the screening team and staff at Anabta for detecting these issues early on, allowing Mutaz to continue his studies.



Muna Omar Ghaith receiving care at Hebron

### Meet Muna Omar Ghaith, a 61-year-old patient at Hebron Hospital

Muna Omar Ghaith, a mother of eight, comes from a very poor family in the city of Hebron, where she endures challenging circumstances living among settlers.

She faces significant health challenges, including diabetes, hypertension and cardiac issues. On top of that, she was diagnosed with cataracts in both eyes three years ago.

Since her diagnosis, she has been a regular patient at the St John Eye Hospital in Hebron, undergoing cataract surgery in her right eye in 2023, followed by surgery on her left eye a year later.

Thanks to the generous support of the Qatar Fund for the Development, the Hospital Group covered the entire cost of Muna's cataract treatment.

As a result, Muna's vision has significantly improved, allowing her to lead a better quality of life, saying she will "never forget" what they've done for her.



Yazan Shahwan outside the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem holding his beloved camera

### Meet Yazan Shahwan, a 19-year-old patient at the Jerusalem Hospital

Yazan Shahwan, from Beit Our near Ramallah in the West Bank, discovered his passion for photography and videography at the age of 10, around the same time he was diagnosed with Stargardt's retinopathy, an inherited condition causing progressive vision loss.

What began as a hobby quickly became a profession, demonstrating Yazan's determination to overcome the limitations of his condition. His commitment to photography led him to enrol in the Photography and Media Technology program at Palestine Technical University – Kadoorie in Ramallah.

Throughout his journey, SJEHG has been a vital source of support, helping Yazan navigate the challenges of Stargardt's retinopathy, which ultimately caused a squint.

With generous funding from the Qatar Fund for Development, Yazan recently underwent corrective surgery to treat the squint.

Expressing his gratitude, Yazan said "I thank the eye hospital for supporting my battle since I was 10, and to QFFD for funding this surgery."

**Your continued support helps make stories like these possible, and we thank you for helping us change lives.**



# ACCOLADES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

*HM King Charles III, our Sovereign Head, has granted admissions to and promotions in the Most Venerable Order with effect from 4th April 2024. We are delighted that included amongst those names are two stalwarts of the Hospital. Our congratulations go to our CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali and trustee Jamie Ingham Clark on their promotion to Knight. This is a rare and prestigious honour and very much reflects the respectability of and standing of the Hospital within the Order.*



SJEHG's CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali, KStJ PhD MPH BSN PGCE ENB

## Dr Ahmad Ma'ali, KStJ PhD MPH BSN PGCE ENB

Dr Ma'ali's remarkable journey with the eye hospital began over 30 years ago, when he joined as a student nurse in 1990.

After graduating with distinction, he pursued a bachelor's degree in nursing from Greenwich University, UK, and completed his ophthalmic training at Moorfields Eye Hospital. He also obtained Nurse Tutor qualifications from Bolton Institute and John Moores University in Liverpool, UK.

In 2000, Dr Ma'ali was appointed Head of the Nursing School and hospital's Infection Control Coordinator, demonstrating his commitment to healthcare leadership. He earned a master's degree with distinction in public health management from Al Quds University in 2003.

Dr Ma'ali's career at SJEHG continued to grow, and in 2009, he was appointed the first local Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professions, along with serving as the clinical governance executive lead. His academic journey culminated in 2017 when he completed the PhD at De Montfort University in Leicester.

In 2017, Dr Ma'ali's exceptional leadership led to his appointment as joint CEO for Clinical Services, later becoming the first Palestinian CEO for the Group in June 2019.

His contributions to the field were further recognised when he was promoted to a Knight of the Order of St John, a distinction that reflects not only his personal achievements, but the humanitarian work SJEHG has been doing in the Holy Land for over 140 years.

## Jamie Ingham Clark, KStJ, FCA

Jamie Ingham Clark, a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, has dedicated over 40 years to the Order of the Hospital of St John, beginning his service in 1980 as a Member of the Ceremonial Staff.

Initially serving as an esquire to his father, who was a Knight of Justice of the Order, Jamie was promoted to Officer in 1985 and to Commander in 2002.

In 2014 his responsibilities led him to the hospital's Finance Committee after overseeing an investiture at the hospital in East Jerusalem. Three years later, he joined the Board.

Jamie's extensive experience in corporate governance, gained through his career in the insurance industry and his nine-year tenure on the Court of Common Council, enables him to effectively contribute to the Order's

work. He now serves on several committees and chairs the Investment and Guild Liaison Committees.

Along with his role as a Trustee on the Board, Jamie is also a member of the Knights Templar who have long been associated with the hospital.

His commitment to the Order's humanitarian mission, particularly in providing eye care in the Holy Land, is steadfast. Jamie emphasises the importance of building relationships within the City of London and beyond to further the Order's work.

His dedication is evident through his frequent visits to Jerusalem and close work with the team there and within the UK as well as his travels around the UK to engage donors and share the hospital's news and achievements.

As the son of a Knight of the Order, Jamie is particularly proud to have achieved the same rank as his father.



Jamie Ingham Clark KStJ, FCA

# OBITUARIES

## **Ursula, The Dowager Lady Westbury, CBE GCStJ (May 6th, 1924 – November 25th, 2023)**

*Ursula, Lady Westbury, who passed away at the age of 99, was a remarkable figure whose life was marked by her tireless dedication to public service, her enduring friendship with the royal family, and her invaluable contributions to St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group and St John Ambulance.*

*Born Ursula Mary Rose James on May 6, 1924, in the house of her grandfather, the Earl of Scarborough, at 21 Park Lane, Lady Westbury was introduced to a life of service and philanthropy from an early age. The Earl, who had been Sub Prior of The Order of St John since 1923, arranged for Ursula and her friends to be taught artificial resuscitation, laying the foundation for her lifelong commitment to the organisation.*

*Ursula's mother, Lady Serena James, passed on to her the Lumley Brick Company, and through her marriage to Captain David Bethell, later Lord Westbury, Ursula became doubly connected to the aristocracy. Despite her aristocratic background, Ursula was known for her down-to-earth nature and her genuine interest in people from all walks of life.*

*Her marriage to Captain David Bethell brought her into contact with members of the Royal Family, particularly Princess Margaret and Queen Elizabeth II, with whom she shared a lifelong friendship. Lady Westbury often took on informal Royal duties, including representing Princess Margaret at memorial services.*

*Lady Westbury's career with St John Ambulance began in 1954 when she accepted the role of County Vice-President of the East Riding of Yorkshire. Her tenure culminated in her appointment*

*as Superintendent-in-Chief for St John Ambulance, worldwide, in 1983, a position she held with characteristic determination and flair until 1990. During her time as Superintendent-in-Chief, Lady Westbury modernised the organisation, touring Commonwealth countries, updating the women volunteers' uniforms, and organising the Great Party in 1988 when 100,000 attended in Hyde Park including HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.*

*Following her retirement from the ambulance service, she dedicated herself tirelessly to raising funds for the Hospital Group, championing its life-changing initiatives. Until her passing, she remained a driving force within its Ladies' Guild.*

*Lady Westbury was known for her ebullient personality, her strength of character, and her fascination with people. She had a phenomenal memory for names and faces and was stoic, humorous, forthright, and determined to do what was right.*

*In her final year, Lady Westbury was not only still driving but was also the proud recipient of her first speeding ticket! She lived a life marked by service, friendship, and a deep commitment to making the world a better place.*

*Lady Westbury is survived by two sons and a daughter. Her legacy of kindness, generosity, and tireless dedication to others will continue to inspire all who knew her. She lived the mottoes of the Order of St John that of Faithful Christian Service to others.*

*May she rest in peace and rise in Glory.*

*Ursula, Lady Westbury, born May 6, 1924, died November 25, 2023.*



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*Ursula's wedding to Captain David Bethell*



*Ursula's wedding day attended by her close friends Princess Margaret and Queen Elizabeth II*



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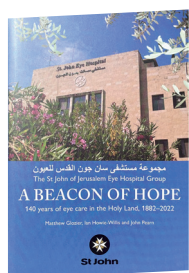
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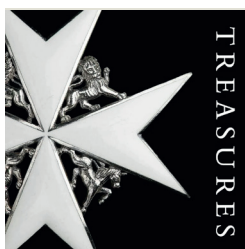
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