

SJEHG's special edition for our Brother Knights of K.T.



**TOGETHER,
WE'RE
SAVING
SIGHT,
CHANGING
LIVES.**



**St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group**

A Thousand Years of Friendship: The Knights Templar and the SJEHG



Harriet Wheeler, Executive Head of UK Office and Kezia Niman, Senior Grants and Partnerships Officer of UK Office, pictured at Freemasons' Hall in May 2024.

The relationship between the Knights Templar and the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG) goes back over 100 years, to early twentieth century. Yet legend takes us even further back - in the Middle Ages the Knights of St John established the first hospice for soldiers and pilgrims in Jerusalem. It is likely that many a Knights Templar passed through the doors of the Hospice of St John, looking for remedy and respite.

The echoes of the Holy Land's past can still be felt in Jerusalem today. It is still a place of great sanctity and significance to millions all over the world. You can still pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, bask in the gardens of Gethsemane and bathe in one of the city's many natural springs. And yet, just like 1,000 years ago, there is great strife, much suffering, and an urgent need for medical care.

Today, Palestine is experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises imaginable. As the war in Gaza continues and debilitating movement restrictions remain in place across the West Bank, it is easy to feel dismayed, hopeless even. The last eight months have been some of the most challenging in the Hospital's history.

Yet we must rise to this challenge.

In 2024, the SJEHG continues to embody the spirit of care initiated by the Knights of St John. Against the current backdrop of war and political uncertainty, we continue to provide expert ophthalmic treatment to over 135,000 patients every year.

Despite the ongoing crisis , we are providing emergency eye care in Gaza (please see page 3) opening a new day hospital in Nablus (page 08) and to expanding our services in the West Bank. It is thanks to your support that we continue to provide essential services - restoring sight even in the darkest of times.

It is safe to say that very few friendships share the depth, commitment and history of the Knights Templar and St John of Jerusalem. In 2023 the Knights Templar donated a quarter of a million pounds to support the SJEHG's critical work, saving sight and changing lives. With your support, we opened a new paediatric unit in Jerusalem last year. Members continue to donate to support staff salaries, equipment costs and to our Orthoptic Department. As we fundraise for our Saving Sight in Gaza Appeal, we feel reassured knowing we have a firm friend in the Knights Templar.

We are eternally grateful for your continued dedication to the SJEHG. We simply would not be able to deliver the expert care our patients desperately need without your support. It fills our hearts to know that the Knights Templar, our Brethren of 1000 years, are still by our side today.

Mother and children being screened by SJEHG staff in Gaza





Emergency Appeal

The Israel - Hamas war has caused an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. It has claimed the lives of over 35,000, injuring over 75,000 - mostly women and children - and created 1.9 million refugees, including all Gazan SJEHG staff. As you can imagine, the impact on eye health in Gaza has been immense. At this very moment there are thousands of people in Gaza, who are at risk of permanently losing their sight.

To meet the needs of the Gazan population, we launched our three-phase Emergency Gaza Response (EGR) in late April. Phase One is now successfully underway, focusing on Primary Eye Care, including screening patients, administering eye drops and dressing wounds. We have four teams working across the Strip, treating about 60 patients per day in total - that's over 6,000 people overall. Even in the bleakest of times, the SJEHG remains a beacon of hope.

Now, we are seeking funding to progress to Phase Two: Blindness Prevention. Phase Two will focus on addressing the leading causes of sight loss in the Gaza Strip – Diabetic Retinopathy and Glaucoma. To effectively treat these conditions, we need funding for specialist medication and equipment. All in all, Phase Two will cost £495,000.

Eventually we hope to progress to Phase Three of the EGR, and rehabilitate our main Gaza Hospital, which suffered collateral damage and looting. We must re-establish surgical services, vital for treating debilitating diseases like cataracts. The total cost of our EGR will cost at least £6 million – that's on the top of our £10 million operating costs.

With your support, we believe we can save sight and change lives in Gaza. Please consider supporting us as we aim to rebuild lives shattered by war, by restoring vision. After all, it is hard to look to the future when you cannot see.

A BEACON OF HOPE

Rebuilding Gaza's shattered healthcare system



St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group



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

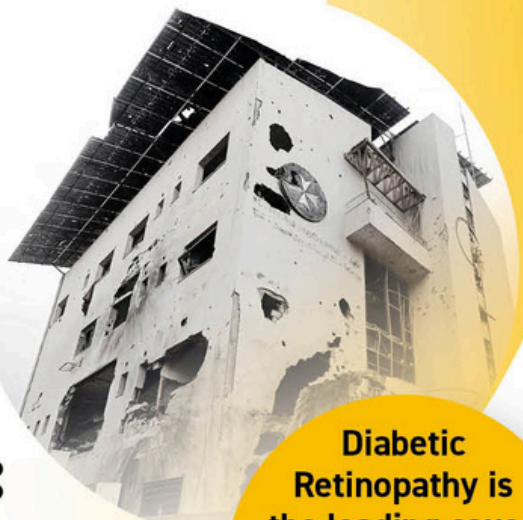
PHASE 2:

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



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

Diabetic Retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in Gaza

15% of Gazans have diabetes

BUDGET

Gaza Emergency Response

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



St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group





Grand Master's Address:

Before closing, I want to bring you up to date with the situation at the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. As agreed at our November meeting of the Great Priory of Malta, we have transferred £100,000 as a contribution towards the funding of key support staff for the Paediatric department at Jerusalem. Patients as young as a few days old up to twelve years of age are treated by a team of thirteen, providing comprehensive eye care to children suffering from serious and blinding diseases. By supporting this, we are enabling the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group to continue its vital work for children in the Palestinian Territories.

As to the hospital these are turbulent times indeed. The good news is that since 20 April they have been able to provide clinics in Gaza which allows them to do vision screening as well as treatment for eye infections and the dressing of wounds. This is a huge improvement and took over 6 weeks of negotiating with the many relevant powers that be. This is the first part of a three phase plan to restore a full service in Gaza. The next step will depend on being able to transport refrigerated medication, which will extend services to the prevention of blindness and the treatment of Diabetic Retinopathy. Phase three will be to reopen the hospital which is not expected until the end of the year at the earliest.

Meanwhile, in the rest of the West Bank the level of violence remains considerably higher than before the war started. The clinics there remain busy but the level of operations performed in Jerusalem is at about 75% of what it was, mainly due to movement restrictions. Because of this, a site in Nablus has been purchased and is being fitted to accommodate patients by the end of the year. This is an important step for the hospital group which makes our continued support even more vital. Our association with the Hospital group goes back well over a 100 years and we would appear to be as passionate about it now as I'm sure we were in the early days.

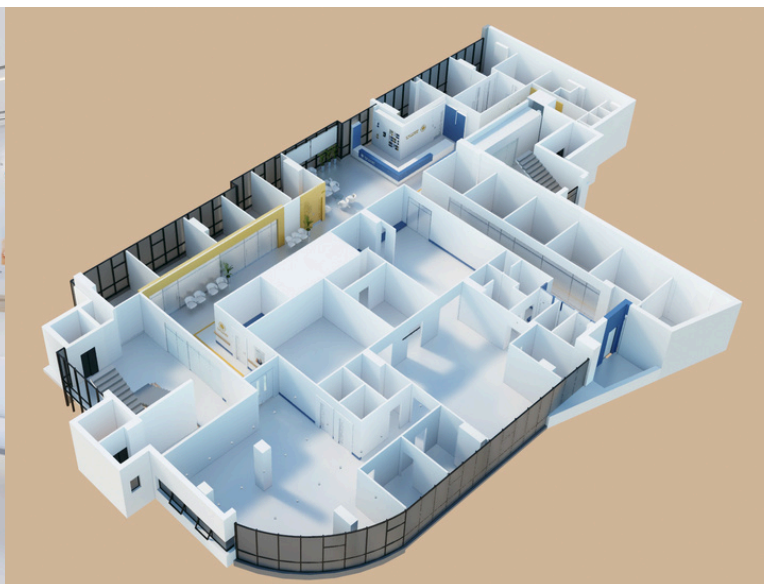
Expanding Services in the West Bank

Despite 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. Patient numbers in Jerusalem subsequently dropped, while the numbers being treated in Kufor Aqab and Hebron reached record numbers.

In response to restrictions increasing patient numbers in the West Bank we are planning to expand our services in the area, to reach more people in need of top-quality eye care.

To do this we will:

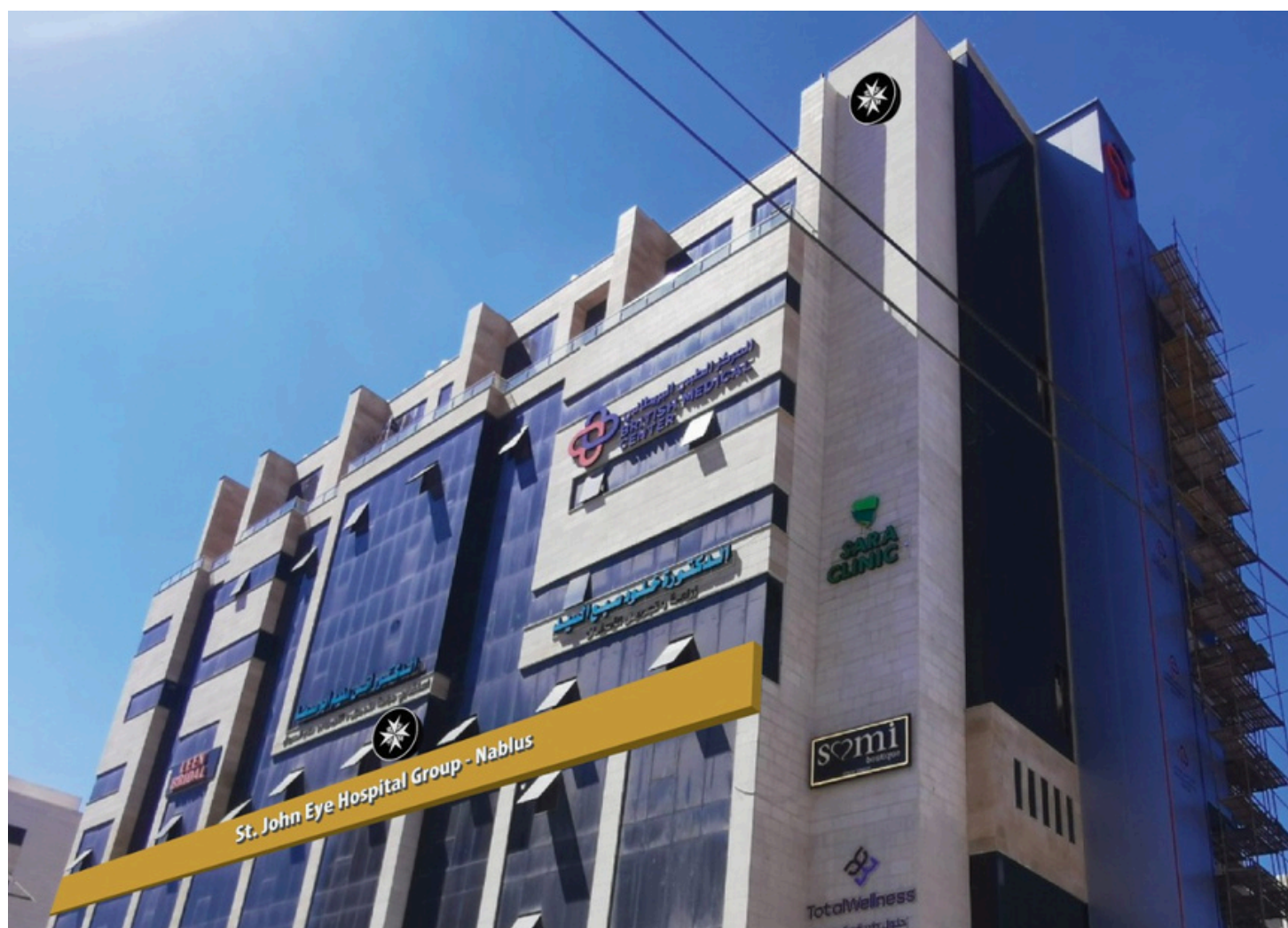
- Open a new day hospital in Nablus – for the first time this will mean patients in the northern West Bank have access to surgery without the need to travel to Jerusalem.
- Continue subspecialty services at Kufor Aqab. ensuring ongoing specialised care for patients.
- Introduce general anaesthetic at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



opening a new day hospital in Nablus and expanding our services in the West Bank. The Nablus day-hospital will replace our clinic in rural Anabta. Nablus' location in the heart of the Northern West Bank's populous urban centre makes it ideal in terms of accessibility.

The Nablus Day Hospital Will be:

- The only charitable provider of expert eye care for children and adults in the northern West Bank.
- The only provider of complex surgical treatments in the West Bank – the first time such surgical treatments will be available in the region.
- Patient-centred and fully accessible.
- Include 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.



A mock-up of the upcoming Nablus Day Hospital

Gazan Nurse Sponsored by the Hertfordshire K.T.

- The SJEHG would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Provincial Priory of Hertfordshire for sponsoring Gazan Nurse Maysoun. She is currently working in Deir Al Balah and Nuseirat in Central Gaza, helping to deliver our Emergency Gaza Response (EGR).



Pictured: Maysoun (second from the right) with the team and a mother and child being screened, in Deir Al Balah in May.

Thanks again to the Provincial Priory of Hertfordshire for supporting one of our much-needed staff members at this time of crisis. If you or your Provincial Priory would like to sponsor a staff member, please contact the SJEHG London Office (info@stjohneyehospital.org) and Mark Masons' Hall.

Provincial Fundraising Spotlight Page

In every newsletter we plan to spotlight three different Provincial Pories raising funds for the SJEHG. This quarter we are spotlighting Dorset and Wiltshire, Essex, and Staffordshire and Shropshire.

The Provincial Priory of Dorset and Wiltshire have just donated £2,000 for a child's eye screening kit in Gaza. The kit will be used to help diagnose vision problems in children and toddlers, by assessing qualitative and quantitative measures of a child's sight. The kit is an essential piece of equipment, helping doctors and nurses accurately identify and treat eye conditions in children. The Eye Hospital's semi-mobile teams have treated some 6,000 patients in the war-torn Strip so far, over a third of whom are children. Thank you, Dorset and Wiltshire for supporting the Emergency Gaza Appeal. Your donation will quite literally help the next generation to see into the future, by ensuring children in Gaza get the treatment they desperately need.



Watch: A video of a young girl having her eyes tested in a refugee camp in Khan Younis, Gaza. Thanks to the Provincial Priory of Dorset and Wiltshire, we will soon have a child's testing kit in Gaza, making diagnosing eye problems in children easier and more accurate.

We would also like to spotlight the Provincial Priory of Essex, who recently donated £2,600 to pay for a heated food trolley in the SJEHG's flagship Jerusalem hospital. The food trolley will ensure that patients receive tasty, nutritious food during their stay at the hospital, boosting their recovery. Over 3,300 major operations took place at the hospital in 2023. Many of those patients would have spent some time convalescing in the wards. Having a hot meal delivered to their bedside will make a big difference to their patient experience. Thank you very much Essex, with your support patients in Jerusalem can access high quality care, helping us to maintain our status as the only Palestinian hospital with JCI accreditation, an internationally recognised indication of healthcare excellence.

Pictured: The food trolley generously donated by the Provincial Priory of Essex.



The Provincial Priory of Staffordshire and Shropshire are very generous, long-term supporters of the SJEHG. The Eye Hospital has received over £4,000 from members since the start of 2024 alone. All their donations go towards saving sight and changing lives in Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank. On behalf of the SJEHG, Thank you Staffordshire and Shropshire for your dedication to our mission. Every donation your members give makes a real difference to our patients' lives. All their donations go towards children's s services - saving sight and changing lives in Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Pictured: Children in Jerusalem being screened as part of a school outreach programme organised by the SJEHG's Beit Sahour clinic in the West Bank.



On behalf of the SJEHG, a big thank you to all the Brother Knights who have donated to the Eye Hospital. The support of the Knights Templar means the world to patients and staff. Thanks to you, the Eye Hospital is restoring sight and preventing blindness in the Holy Land. You are helping to transform people's lives from one of social exclusion and dependency, to a life of inclusion and independence. Once again, thank you.



SJEHG Awards and Accolades

His Majesty the King has granted admissions to, and promotions in the Order of St John. Congratulations to SJEHG's CEO, Dr Ahmad Ma'ali and trustee and K.T. member, Jamie Ingham Clark on their recent Knighthoods.



Click on the video icon above to see a message from Niall, Deputy Great Almoner

Merchandise

Accessories



SJEHG Pen (£5.50).



St John Eye Hospital
Silk Tie (£25)



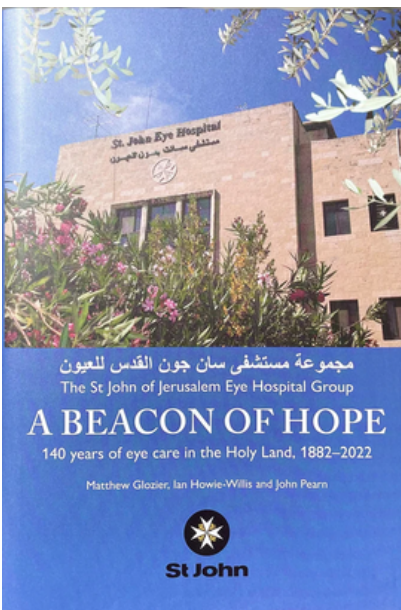
Tabard
(Orange) (£5).



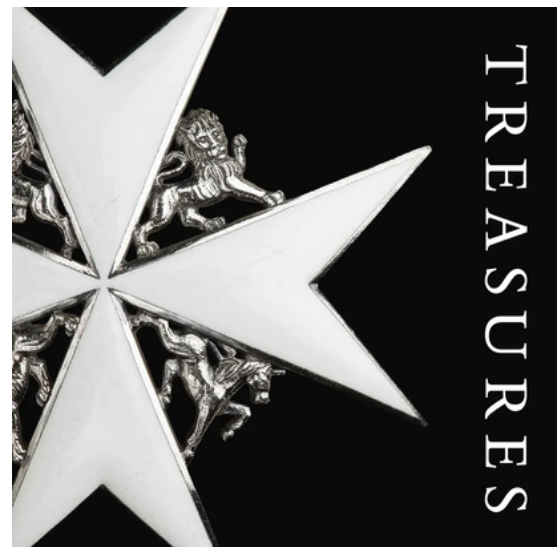
NEW
Unisex Short
Sleeved T-
Shirt (Gold).



Books/videos



A Beacon of
Hope: 140
years of eye
care in the
Holy Land,
1882-2022'
Paperback
(£36).



'Treasures' by Tom
Foakes (£50).

Cards



'Santa's Helpers' Christmas Cards
(pack of 10, inside message:
'Wishing you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year') (£5).



Visiting the New
Born King.
(£5).



Swift of Hope Fly for St John -
Blank Cards-Pack of 5 (£5).



For more items
from our Shop





Knights Templar Swift Pins



Knights Templar
Swift Pins

£20 each

Gift aid can be applied to the donations.

Provinces can order in bulk, or individuals can purchase single pins, by contacting our charities team at charitiesfinance@mmh.org.uk

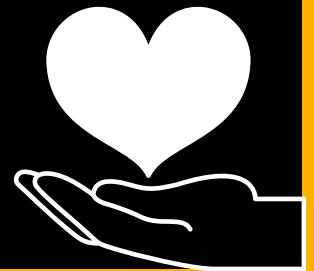
funds raised will go to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group.



Eye drops being administered to a young patient in Gaza

All of this can only be achieved through your continued support for our shared vision to provide expert ophthalmic care in this region.

Donate to our emergency appeal today.



To donate: Open the camera on your smartphone and point it at the QR code below. It'll take you directly to our appeal page.

Or visit

www.stjohnseyehospital.org/donate-now/emergency-appeal/



Other Ways To Get Involved



If you would like to fundraise for us, please get in touch. We have many fundraising resources available to [download from our website](#), including how-to guides, posters, and leaflets.

[Click here](#)

We also have a number of resources available for loan in our office:

- Pop up banners
- Collection boxes
- Collection buckets
- Tabards



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info@stjohnehospital.org

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St. John Eye Hospital
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WE'RE SAVING SIGHT,
CHANGING LIVES.**



**St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group**

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