



### Reflections from the Holy Land Ahli Hospital – Shattered Dreams!

Last night shortly after the day of fasting, abstinence, and prayer for peace ended with beautiful services in many churches in the Holy Land and throughout the world, the tragic news started coming out from Gaza that the Ahli Hospital which is owned and operated by the Anglican Church was shelled causing hundreds of deaths of innocent children, women, and elderly who were taking refuge in the hospital buildings and courtyards. They thought that hospitals would be spared. Little did they know that during this current vicious war, respect and adherence to international norms during wars and respect of international law count for nothing. It is clear that no one is spared, there are no safe havens and with the continued severe blockade, our people in Gaza are living for the past 12 days of the war with no electricity, water, fuel supplies, food, and medical supplies. Hospitals are on the verge of collapsing. Ahli Hospital was shelled and is out of service, other hospitals will implode due to lack of electricity, and medical supplies and will soon be out of service as well! A truly man-made humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in front of our eyes and regretfully the world is watching and doing nothing to stop it!



Like all other Christian institutions in Gaza including Ahli as well as schools, clinics and others providing services in health, social services and education, there has been major expansions to their facilities and services over the past two decades despite the blockade of the past 16 years. Ahli Hospital added a new building which was hoped to be a diagnostic center of excellence to treat cancer cases and be the leader in Gaza as no such centers exist there. Not knowing the extent of the damage to the buildings and equipment at the present time, I am assuming there will be a lot of shattered dreams in Gaza as it will be a long time before such services are restored!

Elsewhere and as an update, most members of our Christian community have all by now took refuge at one of the two churches in Gaza, either the Latin Holy Family Church where 500 people are calling them their temporary home, or at the St. Porphyrios Greek Orthodox Church with around 400 people. So far, we are happy to announce that we have managed to make the necessary resources available to meet their needs including food, water, and medical supplies as well as electricity for as long as there is diesel deliveries to the generator. However, both churches are in the same neighborhood



as the Ahli Hospital and all of them are in the north of Gaza, which is the area that Israel asked all 1.1 million residents to evacuate. Given that the churches do not have any institutions in the south of Gaza to serve our people, the decision was that the churches will not be closed and the faithful will not be asked to leave. Every effort will be made to continue to take care of their needs and keep them out of harms way. However, prayers are needed for their safety and continued wellbeing. Additionally, it is important to mention that the other school belonging to the LPJ being the Holy Family School at the destroyed Remal neighborhood was turned into a shelter housing around 800 people being our neighbors who lost their homes in Remal.



As a general update about the situation in Gaza and according to United Nations sources, since my last reflection, the number of people killed has risen to over 3,000 including 850 children and 12,500 injured. These figures exclude the casualties from the Ahli Hospital shelling of last night. As for the people internally displaced, the figure stands at 1 million (out of the 2.2 million total population), of whom only around 400,000 are placed in United Nations and other designated emergency shelters, while the rest are simply on their own! The human stories shared with us are many and only inspire us to do more to be of support.

We are touched by receiving unsolicited donations from our friends around the world to help us sustain our operations and support our people in Gaza. All donations received at the present time are dedicated to deal with providing the basic necessities to our 900 people who are at both the Holy Family Church and the Greek Orthodox St. Porphyrios Church. We already know that the post-war needs will be great as we are already aware of homes either partially damaged or completely destroyed, buildings currently used as shelters will need to be rehabilitated to become fit for use again, cash assistance to many as well as other humanitarian supplies, not to mention psychosocial programs at the parishes and through the schools, amongst a sea of needs. Once the circumstance allows, we will be engaged in quantifying these needs and designing interventions to meet the growing needs to help people stand on their own feet again, and a formal appeal will be launched. It is certainly pre-mature (even irresponsible) to engage in appeals now not knowing how Gaza in general and our Christian community in particular will look like after the war and as hostilities come to an end!



We renew our call to all parties to end the war now, to allow humanitarian supplies in immediately in order to avoid a total collapse of Gaza, and to seek a political track that will deal with the root causes of this decades old conflict so that this can be the last war in the region after which justice and peace to all can prevail. We shall continue to dream that this will occur during our lifetime and that future generations will be spared more wars. Please keep praying for us and many thanks for your continued support, encouragement, and solidarity.

*Sami El-Yousef  
Chief Executive Officer  
18 October 2023*