



*The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & The Middle East*  
*The Diocese of Jerusalem*

*The Most Revd. Suheil Salman Dawani*

October 2, 2018

Dear Friends of the Diocese of Jerusalem,

The announcement in early September that the U.S. Department of State would redirect \$200 million pledged for this fiscal year to fund UNRWA and the subsequent news that the U.S. Government will cut additional \$25 million in direct aid to support hospitals affiliated with the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, are the newest examples of the bitter and escalating conflict that began earlier in 2018; when the U.S. threatened to cut hundreds of millions in aid to Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Such cuts deeply impair our ability, at the Diocese of Jerusalem, to respond to the humanitarian needs of more than 5.8 million Palestinian refugees throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories and those across the region.

For a people for whom humanitarian crises has been commonplace for the last seven decades, such sweeping new cuts in humanitarian aid, following a months-long freeze on the delivery of promised funds from USAID to agencies on the ground, portends unprecedented hardship for a vast number of Palestinians. Already hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable people, particularly those in Gaza, are feeling the devastating effects in all sectors of society.

With its 30 humanitarian institutions, the Diocese of Jerusalem is facing heretofore unknown challenges that will have a lasting and detrimental impact on the many people in Palestine we serve. In the Gaza Strip, for instance, the cuts are now already felt at the Ahli Arab Hospital (AAH) in two ways. A 3-year \$900K joint project between AAH and USAID-funded agencies Mercy Corps and International Medical Corps (IMC) to provide medical care to refugees has been inhibited by the cuts. Additionally, AAH is deeply impaired by the \$200 million cut on humanitarian assistance to UNRWA that addresses the needs of Palestinian refugees in Gaza. The impacts of those cuts are being severely felt at AAH now within a population of 2.1 million Gazans. Almost 75% of AAH funding is dependent on such programme aid. This year's Memorandum of Understanding with UNRWA called for subsidy of \$54,000 per month. In the wake of the cuts, AAH will now receive no more than \$14,000 per month, a reduction of nearly 72 percent. Stopping those two vital projects has not only affected our work in the medical field, but also drastically reduced the level of support AAH offers the Palestinian refugees we serve in areas such as women's empowerment, food aid, employment assistance, free medical care to the poor, free care for burn injuries, and a program to treat underweight or malnourished children. The cuts have forced us to downsize our operation and lay off most of our programme staff. These cuts trickle down to all levels of Gazan society with drastic repercussions for the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.

The scale of the crisis and the impact of these cuts facing Palestinians is also felt at the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center, which is identified as one of the four National Referral/Resource Centers



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for the growing model of Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) to provide rehabilitation and medical treatment to children with physical disabilities and their families from East Jerusalem and the West Bank through the Centre itself and through its outreach clinics in the West Bank. Jerusalem Princess Basma Center has a long-term relationship and a signed memorandum of agreement with UNRWA to provide humanitarian assistance and medical rehabilitation services to refugees.

The decision of the U.S. Government to cut an additional \$25 million in direct aid to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network - of which Jerusalem Princess Basma is a part - will directly hamper our already exhausted financial commitment to our institutions, which provide critical services to children and their families. The ability of the Diocese of Jerusalem to mitigate the negative financial impact resulting from the toll of U.S. cuts in aid is in doubt and puts thousands of Palestinians and their children in grave jeopardy.

Please allow me to speak from my heart. Cutting off programs that benefit Palestinians will deeply damage the continuity of our operations and our desire to contribute to human progress. If we don't act immediately and shift gears to find other means of support and subsidy to our affected diocesan Institutions, I can't perceive how we can sustain and support them with the limited resources we have. I am very much concerned and afraid that cutting off all American assistance, mostly in humanitarian aid, has hobbled the aid agencies that receive the funds, and more consequently, crippled the lives of Palestinians who continue to live in dire need and have fewer employment prospects now more than ever. This is unfair and beneath our compassion.

As faithful servants of Christ and active stewards of the world in which we live, we at the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East are called to share our financial blessings for the greater good. Please consider making a recurring gift so that the miracle of multiplication can continue. Your gifts will support the work of our schools and health institutions, rehabilitation centers and much more.

For information about making a contribution to the Diocese of Jerusalem, please contact the programme Director Mr. Hanna Theodorie, at [hanna.theodorie@j-diocese.org](mailto:hanna.theodorie@j-diocese.org) or +972 2 6271670 or mobile +972 547760441. If you are in the U.S., please consider a donation through the secure channels offered by the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Contact John Lent, Executive Director, at [jlent@afedj.org](mailto:jlent@afedj.org) or visit [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org).

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Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem  
& the Middle East