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LWF COUNCIL STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION OF ISRAEL-PALESTINE

The Council is deeply concerned by the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the recent escalation of violence, including the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh, other journalists and other innocent victims. It is discouraging that thus far, no solution has been provided to the serious situation and as a result people's human rights, lives, livelihoods and dignity are threatened. The Council affirms and aligns itself with international human rights and humanitarian laws and principles as important instruments that must be protected. The Council regards the continuous occupation as a violation of these instruments.

The Council recognizes and affirms the ministry and witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), noting its unwavering commitment to speaking out for justice, peace and reconciliation in the context of the Israel-Palestine situation.

The Council affirms the Christian presence in the Holy Land. It shares the local churches' concern for the protection of holy sites and the need to maintain the historic status quo with respect to them.

The Council recognizes with concern the dire financial crisis faced by LWF's Augusta Victoria Hospital, occasioned by the lack of timely payments and remittances from major donors, such as the European Union and the United States of America. The failure to provide sufficient and timely financial support for the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network - of which the AVH is a member -- via the Palestinian Authority has an immediate and direct impact on the hospital's ability to serve thousands of patients who are in need of life-saving cancer and kidney treatment.

The Council affirms the work of LWF, in particularly the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) and Vocational Training Centers (VTC), and the ongoing work of accompaniment to the churches and communities through theology, diakonia and advocacy.

The Council calls on:

- The Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to immediately address the escalation of violence and violation of human rights and ensure peace and justice for all.
- The international community to redouble its efforts towards finding a lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict and to ensure the adherence to international human rights and humanitarian laws and to bring an end to the occupation.

- Governments, including the United States, to urgently provide the necessary financial support and timely future payments to AVH. In this regard, we call specifically on the European Union to expedite the disbursement of its earmarked funding to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, which is part of the EU's 2021 payments to the Palestinian Authority.