

Statement

Augusta Victoria Hospital on behalf of East Jerusalem Hospital Network

20 October 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With the alarming escalation of violence and tension in Jerusalem, the East Jerusalem Hospital Network emphasizes the critical need to respect human rights, the life and dignity of all human beings, and particularly the rights to health and freedom of movement in Jerusalem. State obligations under the right to health include providing non-discriminatory access to health facilities, goods and services.

Currently, all of the hospitals within the East Jerusalem Hospital Network are experiencing challenges to their daily operations due to the placement of Israeli security checkpoints within East Jerusalem neighborhoods. These checkpoints consist of large cement blocks and a heavy military presence, halting normal traffic flows to and from all of the facilities, sometimes limiting it to only one lane of traffic.

“The checkpoints compromise timely access to our facilities. Ambulances and staff have been delayed, negatively affecting our ability to care for and serve our community. This is aggressive and offensive to patients, and their families, and escalates an already tense situation. We are deeply concerned about the well-being of our patients who are particularly vulnerable due to cancer and other medical conditions,” reports Walid Nammour, CEO of Augusta Victoria Hospital.

Furthermore, the East Jerusalem Hospital Network is deeply concerned for its staff, some of whom must pass through multiple checkpoints on their way to and from work. Both Augusta Victoria Hospital and Makassed Islamic Charity Hospital have reported the forced entry of heavily armed Israeli military personnel into their facilities within the last 10 days. Others report injuries to Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) staff and ambulances. This behavior is particularly alarming and in violation of existing agreements between these hospitals and Israeli authorities as well as international humanitarian law.

THE EAST JERUSALEM HOSPITAL NETWORK

The East Jerusalem Hospital Network consists of six hospitals: Makassed Islamic Charity Hospital, Augusta Victoria Hospital, Red Crescent Maternity Hospital, St. John’s Eye Hospital, Princess Basma Rehabilitation Center, and St. Joseph’s Hospital. These hospitals are the main providers for tertiary health care for persons referred by the Palestinian Ministry of Health for services unavailable in the West Bank and Gaza. Additionally, the network has played a leading role in the development of the overall Palestinian health care system and the training of health care workers and specialists. Today, the network continues its collaborative efforts to ensure greater coordination of services and improve the quality of patient care.

###