

..... Overseas Partner Fact Sheet.....

Al Ahli Arab Hospital

How the Hospital started

In the late 1800s, the Church Missionary Society established medical work in Gaza and, in 1907, they built the first hospital in Gaza City. It became a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in 1982.

Because of its location in the centre of the city, the hospital receives patients from a number of heavily populated local neighbourhoods. The hospital works closely with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, so during a crisis when many casualties and victims need care, Al Ahli is the first to receive the overflow from the government hospital.

Members of the senior staff sit on the Palestinian Ministry of Health's various Committees, helping to inform and write national healthcare policies.

During the last few years, because of the current Intifada, the hospital's services have been in great demand. This Christian hospital is known and respected as a provider of high quality healthcare, which is open to everyone in Gaza, regardless of their religious or political affiliation.

Key facts

Founded: 1907

Location: Gaza City, Gaza Strip

First grant from BibleLands: 1990

BibleLands' Grant: £12,660 p.a.

Current Situation

The population of the Gaza Strip is 1.2 million, of whom less than 2,500 are Christians. The worsening situation has seen unemployment rise to over 60% (in some villages it is as high as 100%) and 60% of the population living under the poverty line of \$2 a day. Most families are now dependent on food handouts to survive. In this community, where the majority live in refugee camps, the hospital's care is often free of charge.



The Hospital's Activities

The hospital has 50 beds, but can double this number during emergencies. Around 30,000 out-patients are treated each year in the general medicine clinics, surgery, paediatric, obstetric & gynaecology and urology clinics. Up to 4,000 in-patients are treated each year in the general medicine clinics, surgery, maternity ward and Intensive Care Unit.

The 24-hour emergency and ambulance services are often deployed to areas where violent clashes have taken place. The majority of cases are treated at the site and might include gun shot wounds, gas inhalation, bomb shrapnel, as well as emotional cases.



Above: The continual violence in Gaza affects the hospital in many ways. Here, some local boys show shrapnel they picked up in the hospital grounds in 2003.



Right: The Director, Suhaila Tarazi has led the hospital for many years.

The hospital runs a health education programme in the community, raising public awareness of disease and preventative medicine. The Ministries of Health and Education have praised these campaigns.

Because of the high prevalence of malnutrition (about a third of children under the age of 5 suffer from the condition) the hospital gives out food parcels.

The rehabilitation department provides some of the best rehabilitation services in the Gaza Strip, often to patients who have sustained permanent injuries from shrapnel and bullets.

In response to the current crisis, the hospital offers First Aid training to people who most need to know what to do in a crisis situation, such as school teachers in areas where clashes often happen.

The hospital also has a medical library – the first of its kind in Gaza when it was opened in 1993.

Mobile Clinics: The hospital organises regular medical outreach clinics for the poorest villages in the Gaza Strip, where inhabitants are unable to travel outside the village due to travel restrictions. Buses collect the patients from their village and bring them to the hospital, where they are given desperately needed medical treatment, often for the first time in months. Those who need to be referred for treatment remain at the hospital for as long as necessary. More than 500 people come to each clinic.

As well as giving high-quality, usually free, medical care, the clinics provide the children with sandwiches (*right*), and their families with rice and other staple food goods.



Through its ministry, Al Ahli Arab Hospital tries to give hope to the hopeless, compassion and comfort to those who mourn and dignity to the oppressed. Condemning violence on all sides, the hospital staff search for ways to promote peace, reconciliation and justice for those of all religions and political affiliations in its community.

Because of the ongoing conflicts in the Gaza Strip, the hospital has suffered with its community throughout the years, including when a guided missile landed in the compound in 2003. However, the work of healing in the name of Christ continues to the present day as the staff at the hospital demonstrate Christian love in action. Just as Christ ministered to the poor and needy, so does Ahli Arab Hospital. Thank you for your support of this vital, life-saving work.

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