



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

September 6, 2018

Secretary Michael Pompeo, U.S. Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

I am writing to request your help in securing the release of \$25 million of US FY 2017 funding that will help to ensure that there is no interruption in the treatment of Palestinians at the East Jerusalem hospitals, especially the most vulnerable cancer and kidney patients referred to Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) from Gaza and the West Bank.

I am writing in my capacity as the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and a member church of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) for which I serve as Vice-President for North America. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), owns and operates Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, and the ELCA has been a strong supporter of AVH for many decades.

The release of the \$25 million in 2017 funding designated for AVH and the East Jerusalem hospitals is especially urgent in order to ensure ongoing treatment.

Augusta Victoria Hospital is able to operate because of the support of LWF member churches, like the ELCA, and longstanding partnerships with countries like the United States. In the last decade the US government, through USAID, has invested nearly \$10 million in AVH to bolster its capacity as a cancer center. In addition, the US government has provided over many years tens of millions of dollars in aid to help cover the costs of the cancer patients and others referred to AVH and the other East Jerusalem hospitals. Currently, the AVH is owed over \$33 million while the total owed to the six East Jerusalem hospitals, including AVH, is \$72 million.

In March 2018, the US Congress passed the Taylor Force Act in order to strengthen restrictions on aid to the Palestinian Authority in annual appropriations legislation. It is important to note that the Taylor Force Act includes specific exceptions for the East Jerusalem Hospital Network and a certain amount for wastewater projects and vaccination programs. Congress, through this Act, recognizes the vital role of Augusta Victoria Hospital and the other East Jerusalem hospitals and includes this exemption in order to ensure that cancer patients and others are not harmed by the Act.

The delay in the disbursement of the 2017 funding for the East Jerusalem hospitals is contributing to an acute and severe cash-flow crisis for AVH and the other hospitals. It is the intention of the Lutheran World Federation to continue to provide life-saving treatment to patients from the West Bank and Gaza, but we need the

Administration to release the 2017 funds so that AVH can make payments to pharmaceutical suppliers of cancer medications, pay staff, and avoid any interruption in the treatment of patients.

Thank you so much for all that the US government and people have done and continue to do in support of our service to the Palestinian people through Augusta Victoria Hospital.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

cc: Mr. Jared C. Kushner, Senior Advisor to the President, Executive Office of the President