

Dear Friends and Supporters,

December 16, 2023

I take this opportunity to extend my warmest wishes for a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year to you and your loved ones.

Here at Caritas Baby Hospital, we aimed to mark the conclusion of 2023 in a distinctive way. This year has been remarkably successful in terms of operations and service expansion, aligning with the hospital's new strategic plan, «CBH 2025: Reinventing the Future».

We also wanted to celebrate the hospital's 70th anniversary by honouring the unwavering dedication and commitment to the Palestinian children, especially those who are refugees and among the most disadvantaged.

Regrettably, an unexpected war struck in October, disrupting not only CBH's plans but also compromising the dreams and lives of countless civilians in the region. Since then, in the Palestinian population alone, over 18,000 lives have been lost, with more than a third of them being innocent children, particularly in the Gaza Strip and here in the West Bank.

This war has cast its shadow, making it impossible to celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem and the region while the children of Palestine are suffering from the aggression and shivering in the cold of the tents of refuge. This is what has been declared by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in the city of Jerusalem and what we are committed to as a Christian community and institutions.

The ongoing instability in the Holy Land, which has persisted for over seven decades, has shattered any hopes for peace among Palestinians. It is essential to end the occupation of the Palestinian territory as a root cause of this suffering to enable the local community to live and thrive.

At the hospital level, we have activated emergency status since October 7. This involved stocking enough medical supplies for a period of three months in the warehouses to guarantee the operation of the hospital in these critical times. An overnight stay plan has also been activated to ensure the safety of our employees during any potential invasions.

Despite the beginning of the high season, our young patients are facing limited access to the hospital and its specialized medical services due to the checkpoints surrounding Bethlehem and the general movement restrictions in the West Bank. Currently, our services are available only to those who can physically reach our facility, along with a hotline for medical consultations and social support for those who cannot.

Nevertheless, we are now more determined than ever to continue our mission of providing healthcare to the children in Palestine and will persevere in pursuing expansion projects at CBH, namely the day surgery. The current situation serves as a testament that our presence in Bethlehem is crucial, and we are committed to maintaining it.

Thank you for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers, and for your constant support for the ailing children of Palestine.

On behalf of the Executive Committee,

Issa Bandak, CEO



*“The Palestinian Mother” by Wadi' Khaled, October 2023  
Khaled draws inspiration from iconic representations of the Virgin Mary and child.  
The artwork serves as a poignant commentary on the recurring tragedies  
and hardships faced by mothers and children in the Gaza Strip.*