



A Statement from Bishop Azar on the Ongoing Hospital Attacks in Gaza

On June 5, 2025 at 10 a.m. local time, Israeli forces in Gaza struck inside the Al Ahli hospital compound, killing three journalists and a father who was bringing his injured son to the hospital for surgery. Thirty innocent bystanders were injured in the attack, including four hospital staff.

Al Ahli Arab Hospital is operated by our siblings in the Anglican Church. As our sister church, we stand with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and Al Ahli Hospital in their condemnation of this egregious attack on civilian life. This strike is the latest in a pattern of Israeli attacks on the hospital system in Gaza. As of May 22, 2025 the World Health Organization recorded 697 Israeli attacks on health care services since October 2023.

These attacks against innocent hospital patients and staff reveal a harsh truth: this is not a war against terrorism, but a war against the human beings of Gaza. Those not killed with rockets are killed by a lack of medicine and food. As one of the only remaining operational hospitals in Gaza, Al Ahli Hospital is an invaluable lifeline to the countless in critical need of care.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms not only this latest attack on civilians at Al Ahli Hospital, but all attacks against hospitals, clinics, and other places of healing in Gaza. We express grave concern that patients and staff have been repeatedly asked by Israeli forces to evacuate Al Ahli, and we reject the claim that there are armed groups or any type of terrorist activity operating on hospital grounds. Orders for evacuation of hospital patients display a blatant lack of regard for human life. We reassert that a core principle of humanitarian law is the neutrality and protection of hospitals.

As Christians, we always root our response in the teachings of Jesus Christ. In his parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus points to the value of caring for the vulnerable, no matter if they are from a community outside our own (Luke 10:25-37). When the Lutheran church was started in the Holy Land, hospitals were one of the very first ministries of the church because of our deep commitment as Christ-followers to offer healing and medical aid to all. The ELCJHL is closely connected with Augusta Victoria Hospital, which is operated by the Lutheran World Federation. Before October 2023, cancer patients in Gaza were given special permission to be treated in Jerusalem at the Augusta Victoria hospital. Since no patients have been allowed out of Gaza since October 2023, the Al Ahli Hospital has been working closely with Augusta Victoria to care for these patients as best they can with the lack of material and equipment needed.

We echo our Anglican siblings' call to global leaders, the international medical establishment, heads of churches, our close partners around the world, and all those of goodwill to take immediate and decisive action to ensure international humanitarian standards are upheld, aid is freely and adequately distributed, and the conditions for a lasting ceasefire are reached.

We continue to pray without ceasing for a just path to peace in our land.

Bishop Dr. Sani Ibrahim Azar

Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land