

Press Release

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Jersey Funded Project Brings Vital Eye Care to Thousands in the Middle East

Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA) and St John Ambulance Jersey are to welcome a Jersey-sponsored nurse from Palestine this September as they showcase a partnership that supports life-changing treatment in one of the busiest eye hospitals in the world.

Nurse Muyassar Ghanem - a front-line worker in the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in East Jerusalem - will spend four days on the island meeting officials and St John Ambulance supporters in addition to giving a presentation about her work at a reception at the Jersey Museum on 17th September.

The JOA/ St John Ambulance partnership, established in 2017 and recently extended until 2021, pays for Muyassar's full-time salary as she delivers much needed eye care to thousands of individuals living with high levels of poverty and with limited access to medical care. The St John Eye Hospital Group, of which St John Ophthalmic Hospital is a member, was founded in 1882 at the bequest of Queen Victoria and is the only charitable provider of expert eye care in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem (a combined population of over 4 million). With the help of specialist staff like Muyassar, the group was able to perform over 4,800 major operations and see over 135,000 patients regardless of race, religion or financial status in 2017 alone.

The visit coincides with JOA's 50th anniversary and is an opportunity to demonstrate how the agency supports Jersey-based charities; in 2017 JOA donated almost £1m to local charities conducting life-changing work in 11 countries.

Deputy Carolyn Labey, Minister for International Development and Chairman of Jersey Overseas Aid, said *'We are delighted to be supporting St John Ambulance and the excellent work they do overseas. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate a vital health project that is 100% funded by Jersey and it is with a sense of great pride that we welcome Muyassar to our Island and learn about how Jersey makes a real difference on the international stage.'*

St John Ambulance Jersey's Commandery Executive Officer, Barry Marsden, added 'St John Ambulance, Jersey has responsibility for the two charitable foundations; St John Ambulance and the St John Ophthalmic Hospital. Until 2004, support from St John Ambulance, Jersey was restricted to funds collected at church services but in that year a decision was made to partially fund the salary of a nurse. This partnership with the JOA has allowed us to further develop our desire to totally fund a nurse to enable those less fortunate than ourselves to benefit in health and quality of life. We are so grateful for Muyassar attending Jersey to explain how our contribution is making a real difference to peoples' lives.'

Jersey Overseas Aid

Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA) is an international aid agency funded by the States of Jersey that has been providing life-changing assistance to people in developing countries since 1968.

www.joa.je

St John Ambulance Jersey

St John Ambulance, Jersey is a volunteer led charitable non governmental organisation and dedicated to the teaching and practice of first aid and medical support services. Our vision is that "everyone who needs it should receive first aid from those around them. No one should suffer for the lack of trained first aiders".

www.stjohnambulancejersey.com

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