

The Anglican Church of Canada



L'Église anglicane du Canada

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June 20, 2012

The Honourable Stephen Joseph Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

As Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada I write out of concern for the termination of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) support for the Al Ahli Arab Hospital, Gaza. This hospital is an Anglican health centre of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and non-sectarian in its services. Having visited the hospital in 2009 with The Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, I can attest to the truth that this facility provides care without prejudice to any religious or ethnic community, or irrespective of gender, social class or political affiliation. Staff are very competent and extraordinarily devoted. The consequences of the hospital's closure are devastating for more than one million people, of whom more than half are women and children in desperate need of emergency care and primary treatment.

The Government of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada have for many years been important sources of support for the valuable work of the Al Ahli Arab Hospital. The Government of Canada continues to commit funds to UNRWA's Emergency Fund. Likewise, the Anglican Church of Canada continues funding for ecumenical services to Palestinian refugees in Gaza and elsewhere, and will soon strengthen overall assistance to diocesan health ministries.

UNRWA, not Hamas, nor the Palestinian Authority, nor any other government is the sole provider of education and emergency medical services to 2/3 of the population of Gaza who are refugees. Not unlike Canadian provinces, UNRWA designates more than half of its budget to education and health care.

Prime Minister, I ask you to re-commit Canada to the generous funding of UNRWA, and to its 2012 emergency programs in Gaza, so the Al Ahli Arab Hospital is restored to full service. I urge you to act expeditiously.

Living the Marks of Mission

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Please know of my thanks anticipating your willingness to act with compassion in this matter of urgent humanitarian need. So many people are turning to us in desperation. Let us not be blind to their suffering nor deaf to their cry.

With respect,

I am,

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred J. Hiltz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F" and "H".

Fred J. Hiltz
Archbishop and Primate

Cc: The Honourable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs; UNRWA;
The Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem; The Most Rev. Dr.
Mouneer Hanna Anis, The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.