

Medical Aid for Palestinians works for the health and dignity of Palestinians living under occupation and as refugees.

MAP
MEDICAL AID FOR **PALESTINIANS**

WITNESS

DISPLACED BY WAR IN SYRIA

SYRIA 5 YEARS ON

Palestinian refugees
dispossessed by war

TRAINING THROUGH THE BLOCKADE

Supporting Palestinian
medics to save lives in Gaza

FAMILY MEDICINE

A bold new vision for
healthcare in the West Bank

INSPIRING SUPPORTERS

Making MAP's
work possible

SUMMER 2016



DEAR READER

As I write, the conflict in Syria – now in its fifth year – continues to dominate international headlines. Among the millions of civilians who have fled their homes are an estimated 110,000 Palestinians. They represent a fifth of those whose families have been resident in Syria since they were expelled from Palestine during the Nakba of 1948.

Many of those who remain in Syria find themselves trapped amid fighting between ISIS-linked militants and Syrian government forces, with Palestinian camps such as Yarmouk and Khan Eshieh coming under repeated siege and attack. Tragically, more than 3,000 Palestinians have lost their lives as a result.

We are unable to work in Syria itself, but continue to do everything we can to support Palestinians caught up in the crisis. In this edition of Witness, you will see how our projects in Lebanon are helping traumatised children escape the stresses of exile, and ensuring that refugees can access lifesaving healthcare. Here in London we have also been calling on the UK Government to ensure that Palestinians have the same access to humanitarian assistance and protection as other refugees fleeing the war.

For Palestinians in Gaza, the news that a second generator has at last come online in the power station which was seriously damaged in the 2014 attacks promises a modest but welcome improvement to living conditions. This will see power supply increase to eight-hours-on, eight-hours-off: a far cry from the 24 hour supply we take for granted in the UK.

Regular power cuts mean that families resort to candles and naked flames for light, increasing the risk of deaths and injuries in house fires. In hospitals, switching to and fro from mains to backup generators damages sensitive equipment, causes delays to treatment, and puts patients at risk.

So solving the electricity crisis in Gaza is not just about keeping the lights on; it is about saving lives. We've worked to support and stock Gaza's burns unit at Al Shifa hospital, and to train the medics working there – but what is really needed is an end to the draconian restrictions that put the lives of Palestinians in Gaza at risk.

Meanwhile, the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank are being wrecked in a different manner. Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures have dramatically increased this year, with more homes demolished in the first four months than in the whole of 2015. More than 2,000 Palestinians have been adversely affected, half of them children.

This is the pattern: step by step life is made yet more difficult for Palestinians.

In more positive news, we at MAP were delighted to bring Dr Philippa Whitford MP back to the West Bank and Gaza earlier this year. Dr Whitford is a breast cancer surgeon who volunteered for MAP in Gaza in the 1990s, and was last year elected to Parliament for the Scottish National Party. Travelling with specialist equipment purchased by MAP, in April Dr Whitford conducted operations at a hospital in East Jerusalem before assessing breast cancer care provision in Gaza. You can read more about her trip in this edition.

Though crisis continues for Palestinians across the region, with your help we are running a record number of programmes across our three fields of operation. From mobile clinics in the West Bank, to community midwives in the refugee camps in Lebanon, to ensuring that the emergency rooms in Gaza are stocked with essential medicine – it's fair to say that our work has never been more needed.

TONY LAURANCE CBE
Chief Executive
Medical Aid for Palestinians

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Front cover photograph: Palestinians in Yarmouk camp queue for food parcels in 2014. Yarmouk, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Syria, has been engulfed in fighting between the Syrian government and armed groups since December 2012. Last year, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the camp as "the deepest circle of hell." Many of the Palestinians who lived in the camp have since fled, with tens of thousands of them coming to the already overcrowded refugee camps in Lebanon.

Photo: UNRWA/Rami Al Sayyed

LEBANON

Palestinian health system struggles to cope with growing needs

UNRWA, the UN agency providing basic services to Palestinian refugees, such as education and healthcare, is under increasing pressure as it struggles to cope with the needs of the tens of thousands of Palestinians who have fled the war in Syria.

There were approximately 560,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria at the start of the war. The UN estimates that one fifth of them have fled the country amid continuing attacks and siege in the Palestinian refugee camps of Yarmouk and Khan Eshieh. Approximately 42,000 of these refugees have settled in Lebanon, increasing the pressure on UNRWA, the UN agency providing basic services to Palestinian refugees. Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camps have seen protests this year from Palestinians concerned about changes to UNRWA's healthcare policy, amid rising healthcare costs in Lebanon, and the additional needs of the new arrivals.

GAZA

As blockade enters 10th year, more than 75,000 Palestinians remain homeless

In April, the UN announced that 75,000 people remain displaced after their homes were destroyed in the 2014 attacks. Israel has recently banned all private imports of cement, adding to Gaza's woes.

Recent months have also seen stocks of vital medications fall to their lowest levels since 2014, with supplies of medicines like cancer drugs, antibiotics, and medications for chronic diseases at dangerously low levels. At the same time patients are facing more difficulties getting out for treatments, with over 30% of applications for permits for patients and their companions to travel out through the Erez crossing delayed or denied.



GAZA

Israeli attacks in Southern Gaza spark fears of return to conflict

In May, the Israeli military launched a series of airstrikes in Southern Gaza in the worst outbreak of violence since the 2014 attacks. A 53-year-old woman was killed and several other Palestinians were injured, amid fears of a return to hostilities.

WEST BANK

Hundreds homeless as Israeli demolitions escalate



This year has seen a sharp increase in the rate of Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures such as schools and water cisterns in the West Bank.

The first four months of 2016 saw the demolition or disassembly of 598 Palestinian-owned structures, more than in the whole of 2015. Those worst affected are families in East Jerusalem and isolated Bedouin communities in Area C. Between January and May, 858 Palestinians were displaced from their homes due to demolitions.

WEST BANK

Violence continues as concerns raised over apparent extra-judicial killing

The violence affecting the West Bank since October last year has continued into 2016. Sporadic attacks on Israelis have continued, including a shooting in Tel Aviv which claimed four lives in June, as have regular deaths and injuries to Palestinians at the hands of Israeli security forces.

In March, a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed his concern about the "apparent extrajudicial execution" of a Palestinian by an Israeli soldier, caught on camera in Hebron. The soldier has since been charged with manslaughter by an Israeli military court.



SYRIA FIVE YEARS ON MAP'S VITAL SUPPORT TO DISPLACED REFUGEES

Ziad and his wife are no strangers to war. His family fled to Lebanon from their home city of Haifa in Palestine during the Nakba in 1948. In Lebanon, Ziad grew up as a refugee in the camp of Ein el Helweh. Here they got caught up in Lebanon's civil war and Ziad and his wife eventually moved to Syria for safety in 1982.

That year saw the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent massacre of Palestinian civilians at the hands of Phalangist militias in Beirut's twin refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila: the devastating event which led Dr Swee Chai Ang and colleagues to establish Medical Aid for Palestinians.

Ziad found Syria to be a relatively safe haven for Palestinians, where they were given full access to healthcare, the labour market and other services. They fell in love with their new home in Yarmouk camp in the capital Damascus.

Thirty years later they have been displaced once again. Amid Syria's civil war, now in its sixth year, Yarmouk camp has been

besieged and attacked by government forces and ISIS-linked militants since 2013. All but a few thousand of the original residents have left, and those who remain have little access to food, water or medical aid. So desperate is Yarmouk's plight, the UN Secretary-General last year described the camp as *"the deepest circle of hell."*

This time with children and grandchildren in tow, Ziad and his family crossed the border back to Lebanon in search of safety. They eventually took shelter in Ein el Helweh, Lebanon's largest – and arguably most deprived – Palestinian refugee camp.

Life in Lebanon's camps is harsh, with severe overcrowding, lack of access to basic services like health and education, and high rates of poverty. With the husbands of his three daughters unable to join them, the responsibility to provide for the family fell on Ziad's shoulders. Though he eventually found work as a painter and decorator, he struggled to gain employment. *"I was going around and asking if anyone is hiring when I can clearly see most of the camp residents are unable to find a steady income or work,"* he told MAP.

95%


OF THE 450,000 PALESTINIANS still in Syria are in continuous need of humanitarian aid

AND 

60%

OF THOSE WHO REMAIN ARE INTERNALLY DISPLACED

AN ESTIMATED 3,000-5,000

people are trapped in Yarmouk camp with little access to food, water or healthcare 



Children take part in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

HEALTH POVERTY

In Lebanon, Ziad's story is not an unusual one. Since the war began, an estimated 42,000 Palestinians fleeing Syria have sought shelter in Lebanon. The majority struggle to eke out a living amid the cramped, perilous living conditions of the country's 12 Palestinian refugee camps. Jobs are hard to come by, with high unemployment and countless multiply-displaced refugees living hand-to-mouth. Many are effectively trapped inside the camps, for fear of being sent back to Syria if they pass through Lebanese army checkpoints without the correct visas or permits.

The poverty and marginalisation of these communities makes it all the more devastating when health problems strike. Hospitals in the Palestinian camps are unable to offer many specialised services, and the cost of care in Lebanese hospitals is extremely high. Paying for treatment of a serious illness could mean financial ruin for impoverished families.

Around six months ago, Ziad fell while painting a ceiling and suffered a concussion and several fractures.



Children take part in activities as part of MAP's psychosocial support project



The Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk in Syria has been hit by siege and conflict, causing most residents to flee



activities at a safe space in Burj al Barajneh camp, Beirut

When doctors completed his pre-operative tests, they found a major blockage in his coronary artery requiring immediate surgical intervention. The family had struggled to borrow the \$200 needed for the diagnostic scans, so covering the \$3,200 cost of the operation would be impossible.

Fortunately, MAP's Tertiary Care Programme in Lebanon meant that Ziad was able to receive the operation needed to save his life. Since 2013, MAP has worked alongside UNRWA to help cover the cost of hospital treatments such as surgeries, cancer management, burns therapy and advanced neonatal services for Palestinian refugees from Syria. This ensures that patients like Ziad are able to afford the medical treatments they need, without using up what little resources they have to support their families.

LOST CHILDHOOD

Ziad's daughter, pregnant when she arrived in Lebanon, has also benefitted from MAP's work. She was supported and advised through her pregnancy and birth by MAP's team of community

midwives. But her child is one of a whole new generation of children being born into the harsh conditions of Lebanon's camps.

In displacement as in conflict, children are among the most vulnerable of those affected. Those who have witnessed violence and atrocities in Syria are often severely distressed, suffering flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety, fears and phobias. But displacement brings its own stresses, and many refugee children are at risk of exploitation or abuse, often forced to drop out of school to support their family income.

Since 2014, MAP has sought to support these children through our psychosocial projects. In partnership with UNICEF and four local Palestinian NGOs (Naba'a, Najdeh, NISCVT and Tadamon), MAP runs safe spaces and structured activities for children in 10 of Lebanon's 12 Palestinian refugee camps.

These centres give children a place to play, free from the stresses of their daily lives. Local play therapists provide structured activities and help children to safely express themselves. They identify



MAP helps Palestinian refugees from Syria displaced to Lebanon afford vital hospital treatments



Conditions in Lebanon's camps are overcrowded and dangerous

and refer children with more severe emotional or behavioural problems for individual and family support or counselling. At the centres, children build confidence, a new social network and the support of their peers. This is where the community's remarkable resilience comes from: their ability to support each other despite overwhelming difficulties.

RESILIENCE IN EXILE

Today, Ziad is recovering well from his surgery, but the family's struggles are far from over. Theirs is just one story among many. The large number of Palestinian refugees from Syria have fallen through the gaps of the humanitarian response to Syria's war.

Thanks to supporters like you, MAP has worked for the health and dignity of Palestinian refugees since 1982. The current crisis in Syria has unfortunately meant a whole new generation of Palestinians have now been displaced from their homes. We remain committed to ensuring that they can access the health services and medical care they need and deserve.

Names have been changed to protect identities

In the 5 Years since the Syrian conflict began more than 3,180 Palestinians have been killed and an estimated 110,000 Palestinians have fled the country.

UNRWA and Action Group for Palestinians from Syria

GAZA'S RECOVERY STIFLED BY BLOCKADE



MAP distributing hygiene kits and mattresses to families displaced by flooding in southern Gaza in January

Israel's devastating 51-day attacks on Gaza in 2014 killed more than 2,000 Palestinians – including 556 children – and injured 10,000 more. The violence resulted in destruction to homes, healthcare facilities and basic infrastructure.

Two years on, those effects are still being felt and the situation remains bleak in Gaza. Only 25% of the homes destroyed in the attacks have been rebuilt, leaving 75,000 people still displaced. Restrictions on the entry of private imports of concrete in April further slowed the already glacial pace of reconstruction. In May, a number of Israeli airstrikes and shelling in southern Gaza, which killed one person and injured a number of others, caused renewed concerns about a return to hostilities.

Despite these challenges, MAP's team in Gaza continues to do inspiring work supporting the health needs of residents. When winter flooding displaced hundreds from the southern city of Rafah in January, our team distributed

blankets, mattresses and hygiene kits to affected families. When supplies of vital medicines and medical disposables have dwindled or run out, they have procured new stocks for hospitals. Through partnerships with hospitals, clinics and local NGOs, they have worked to ensure that people can access the care they need, whether providing nutritional care to malnourished children, supporting the development of neonatal services for Gaza's newborns, or helping to adapt homes and public buildings for persons with disabilities.

TRAINING THROUGH THE BLOCKADE

Many of the health challenges are attributable to the ongoing conflict, blockade and closure imposed by Israel and Egypt, now in its tenth year. Gaza's economy is buckling, with unemployment at 43% and 80% of families living below the poverty line.

The blockade doesn't only impede access to medicines and equipment in the territory. It also places severe limitations on the ability of patients to leave for treatment in the West

Only **67%** of patients were approved permits to exit Gaza for medical treatment in December, the lowest rate in **7 years**

Bank or abroad, and for medics to access training outside of Gaza. To help counter this, MAP works to bring medical experts from the UK into Gaza to work alongside their Palestinian colleagues to develop skills and medical specialities.

Since the 2014 attacks, a group of UK-based orthopaedic surgeons have been supported by MAP and our partner charity IDEALS to visit Al Shifa hospital in Gaza City to perform



The site of the Al Wafa rehabilitation hospital, which still lies in rubble two years since the 2014 attacks

complex limb reconstruction operations on patients, many of whom were injured in the conflict.

Now, two years on, a permanent Limb Reconstruction Unit has been established at the hospital, staffed by a dedicated Palestinian team of surgeons, nurses and technicians. MAP has delivered vital equipment, medicines and disposables to the Unit.

SUCCESS IN AL SHIFA HOSPITAL

This Al Shifa team had a high profile success recently, when they saved the leg of patient Jehad Abed Rabo.

At the age of 25, Jehad was severely injured and lost a number of family members in the 2014 Israeli attacks on Gaza. She was treated for the damage to her left leg at hospitals in occupied East Jerusalem and in Israel but developed an infection. Doctors at Tel Hashomer hospital in Tel Aviv informed Jehad's family that they would be unable to remove an orthopaedic nail implanted in the bone of her leg and that the leg should instead be amputated.

On return to Gaza, Jehad's father brought her to Al Shifa hospital for the amputation, but to his surprise the doctors at the Limb Reconstruction Unit said that, with the skills they had learned from the MAP-supported medics who had visited from King's College Hospital in London, they could save the limb without amputation.

The surgical team operated for five hours, successfully removing the nail, and installed an external fixator so that treatment can continue locally. This fixator was donated by MAP as part of our continuing efforts to supply the Unit with the tools and equipment essential to its success.



Participants at a MAP neonatal life support training session in Gaza

"I am honoured to thank the professional team at Al Shifa hospital presented by Dr. Adnan Al Borsh, Dr. Mahmoud Mattar, and Dr. Isam Al Haddad. May you continue to assist your nation, great doctors of Gaza."

Jehad's father



The team at the Al Shifa Limb Reconstruction Unit working alongside the MAP-IDEALS surgeons

Jehad's case has been shared widely in the Palestinian media and on social media. Writing on Facebook, Jehad's father said:

"After 20 months and as a result of the last war on Gaza, Israeli doctors at Tel Hashomer hospital in Tel Aviv decided to amputate my daughter Jehad's leg because they were unable to extract a nail from her leg which was causing a severe bone infection. Thanks to God,

the Limb Reconstruction team at Al Shifa hospital had another opinion, and they operated on my daughter for 5 hours, and they succeeded in doing what the best doctors of the world located in Israel could not do, by extracting the nail from her leg."

"I am honoured to thank the professional team at Al Shifa hospital presented by Dr. Adnan Al Borsh, Dr. Mahmoud Mattar, and Dr. Isam Al Haddad. May you continue to assist your nation, great doctors of Gaza."

VIRTUAL REALITY TRAINING IN GAZA



In January Dr Shafi Ahmed, colorectal surgeon and Associate Dean of the Barts medical school in London, visited Gaza with MAP to provide basic surgical skills training. While there, he saw an opportunity to use his other passion – technology – to support medical training behind Gaza's wall.

In April, Dr Ahmed became the first surgeon to live-stream an operation to students around the world. Among those watching around the world were some of the doctors and students Dr

Ahmed met on his trip to Gaza, who donned virtual reality headsets to follow his procedure to remove cancerous tissue from a 78-year-old colorectal cancer patient.

"I have a huge interest in the use of technology in health education, and believe in Gaza it can be used to overcome the frustrations posed by the blockade," he told MAP. "This technology can help medics in Gaza communicate with people and get teaching and training from around the world."



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DR PHILIPPA WHITFORD MP RETURNS TO GAZA

In the early 1990s, Dr Philippa Whitford and her husband travelled to Gaza to work as medical volunteers for Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) at the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City. Her career has since seen her become one of the UK's most senior breast cancer surgeons, and, as of last year's UK general election, the Member of Parliament for Central Ayrshire.

During this year's Easter parliamentary recess, Dr Whitford returned to Palestine with MAP to perform breast cancer surgeries for Palestinian women at a hospital in East Jerusalem, and to provide educational seminars and assessments of breast cancer care provision across the West Bank and Gaza. In doing so, she became the first backbench MP to visit Gaza through the Erez crossing since 2009, entering in her capacity as a medical expert.

On her trip, Dr Whitford also visited a women's health clinic in al Bureij refugee camp in Gaza, and met with the head of the Dunya Women's Cancer Clinic in Ramallah, to hear how MAP's projects and local partners are supporting Palestinian women affected by cancer to access the care they need. Here are some of the photos from her visit.



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Dr Whitford performs a mastectomy in East Jerusalem alongside the local team



Amid the rubble of the Al Wafa Rehabilitation Hospital, a UN representative describes the devastation caused by the 2014 attacks, and the slow pace of reconstruction since



During a visit to a MAP-supported women's health clinic in Al Bureij refugee camp, Dr Whitford speaks to breast cancer survivors about their experiences



Dr Whitford revisits her former colleagues at the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City for the first time in 25 years



Two of the women who underwent operations recovering in hospital the next day



Dr Whitford and trauma psychologist Laila Atshan join participants in the Right To Movement Marathon in Bethlehem

DEVELOPING FAMILY MEDICINE IN THE WEST BANK

Healthcare providers across the world, including the UK, are increasingly challenged by the needs of ageing populations and the growth of chronic, non-communicable diseases. The healthcare system in the West Bank is no exception, though it must also cope with the obstacles to care inflicted by the occupation and increasing fragmentation of Palestinian land.

Palestine's population, too, is ageing, and rates of non-communicable diseases are on the rise: heart disease and stroke are the main causes of death among adults, and approximately 12% have diabetes compared to roughly 5% in the UK. Without an effective primary care system and efficient referral between GPs and hospitals, patients face an uphill struggle to receive the care they need.



Dr Suha Hamshari, a Palestinian family medicine specialist who has practiced in Jordan and Italy, explains how the current

situation impacts on doctors and patients: "Ministry of Health doctors in primary care clinics are all struggling with burnout. They see about 150 patients every day, to whom they cannot give the quality care they deserve. All they can do is provide a basic service, with short term solutions."

In countries like the UK, when someone has a health problem, they will usually first visit their GP, who can, if necessary, refer them on to specialists for tests or treatment. For most of us, we will visit the same GP over many years, and our families consistently visit the same medical practice or clinic. This is part of what is called the 'family medicine' model of healthcare.

For patients in the West Bank, however, such consistency of care is rare: "What we see now is the phenomenon of 'doctor shopping'," says Dr Hamshari. "Patients go to several doctors trying to get the needed care, which is very inefficient and costly for both the patient and the Ministry."

This year, MAP has embarked on an ambitious new project to transform the way primary healthcare is delivered in the West Bank. Together with a group of UK family doctors (the International Development of Family Medicine in Palestine (IDFMP)), and in cooperation with a range of Palestinian partners, including the Palestinian Ministry of Health, MAP is seeking to bring family medicine to Palestine.

Over the next year, MAP and IDFMP are supporting An Najjah National University (ANNU) to teach Palestinian GPs the key skills needed for applying the family medicine model in their work. MAP is also helping to establish three new training centres for family doctors across the West Bank, and supporting the development of an online programme for the training of multidisciplinary primary healthcare teams.

Speaking to MAP, a student of the ANNU family medicine programme, Dr Jihad Mohsen, underlined the importance of this work: "There is so much pressure on doctors in the West Bank. We see so many patients each day that we do not have the appropriate time to

give to each one of them. Patients now go to specialists directly before seeing a family doctor, which is often unnecessary. This puts huge strains on the entire health system and wastes time and money. If we can change this system, it would be way more cost effective and easier for the Ministry of Health."

"There can be no future without a good family medicine programme," another student of the programme, Dr Omar Abuhamad from Bethlehem, told us. "There is no culture of family medicine in the West Bank, although everybody working in the sector acknowledges the benefits. We need a modification of the entire sector and we need the support of the Ministry to start this revolution."

Ultimately, developing an effective primary healthcare system is fundamental to improving the health of Palestinians in the face of occupation and modern health challenges. Our family medicine project, made possible through the support of people like you, enables us to work side-by-side with Palestinians to make this vision a reality.



The MAP-sponsored mobile clinic visits an isolated Bedouin community in Area C of the West Bank



Dr Omar Abuhamad and Dr Jihad Mohsen at the Najjah campus



A boy receives care at a health c

"There can be no future without a good family medicine programme."

Dr Omar Abuhamad



"Ministry of Health doctors in primary care clinics are all struggling with burnout. They see about 150 patients every day, to whom they cannot give the quality care they deserve."

Dr Suha Hamshari

APPEAL UPDATE

EMERGENCY AID TO WEST BANK HOSPITALS

The violence which engulfed the West Bank towards the end of 2015 caused high numbers of Palestinian casualties, with many injured by Israeli security forces' use of live ammunition and rubber bullets at protests. MAP delivered over £65,000 of additional medicines and disposable medical equipment – including antibiotics, saline solution, and blood serum – to hospitals as they dealt with the influx of injured people.

**WEST
BANK
IN
CRISIS**

entre in the West Bank

PALESTINIAN
STRUCTURES
DEMOLISHED
IN 2015:

548

STRUCTURES
DEMOLISHED
IN FIRST FOUR
MONTHS
OF 2016:

598

DISPLACING
858
PALESTINIANS,
INCLUDING
416
CHILDREN



EAPPI/J. Svanelind



EAPPI/J. Svanelind

THE OCCUPATION'S BARRIERS TO PALESTINIAN HEALTH IN THE WEST BANK

Palestinians face a multitude of barriers to health, including ambulance delays, a cumbersome process of permit application for accessing treatment in East Jerusalem, and the chronic de-development of basic health infrastructure.

These difficulties have been compounded by the ongoing violence and demolitions in the West Bank. The wave of violence affecting the West Bank since last October has continued in 2016, albeit at a lower level, with sporadic attacks on Israelis, and Palestinians injured and killed by Israeli security forces during clashes and protests.

Demolitions have also increased dramatically this year, displacing more Palestinians in the first three months than the whole of 2015. Israeli security forces have destroyed or dismantled hundreds of structures in East Jerusalem and Area C, including homes, schools and water cisterns. Even tents provided by aid agencies to families who have lost their homes have been confiscated. Marginalised Bedouin communities in area C are among those hardest hit and live under constant fear of eviction and loss of livelihood.

In February, UK Prime Minister David Cameron said that he was "genuinely shocked" by the "effective encirclement" of East Jerusalem. With the West Bank segmented by Israel's 280 mile-

long separation barrier, countless checkpoints, and an expanding network of illegal settlements and outposts, the territory's fragmentation has never been more severe.

MAP's projects in the West Bank have long sought to help Palestinians overcome barriers to health. We have delivered healthcare to isolated Bedouin communities for many years, through the mobile clinic we run in partnership with the Islah Charitable Society. We have also launched a new partnership with St John's Eye Hospital to run a mobile eye clinic to provide examination and eye care to Palestinian communities. Launched earlier this year, this project is helping to change lives and restore sight.

MAP

TRAINING IN THE UK, SO THEY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR PALESTINIANS

In the last issue of *Witness*, we introduced our four Asfari-MAP scholars – Palestinian medical and health professionals who are doing a one-year postgraduate course at universities in Britain thanks to support from MAP and the Asfari Foundation. Six months on, they give us an update on their lives and studies in the UK.

IBRAHIM AL MIARI

from Ein El Helweh camp, Lebanon. Studying for MSc Public and Environmental Health Science, Birmingham University

Adapting to life here has been easier than expected, and I have been helped by new friends and the fantastic staff at the university. The people are friendly, though most

of them had never met a Palestinian before so it's been a big responsibility to represent my country and my people well.

I am studying Environmental and Public Health Sciences. It's a really interesting course, with excellent lecturers and classes. I have learned so much about the topic, and have

also learned to be open to every experience, opportunity and person that walks into my life. I have many new ideas to improve the health and environmental status of my community. I hope to make many positive changes to the lives of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon when I return.



AIDA SHAAR

from Nablus, Palestine. Studying for MSc in Human and Applied Physiology, King's College London

My expectations about the UK were different to the reality. Before I came I was worried about many things that today seem very silly – I was watching YouTube videos about

how to use an Oyster Card! I was also anxious about finding a place to pray, but there are prayer rooms on campus.

My course has been interesting. There are only ten students on the course, so we get first-hand experience with many physiological techniques.

Recently we spent a week in Portsmouth studying how the human body responds to cold water immersion. Although it is very challenging as it involves a lot of reading and data analysis, I am enjoying it.



AMANI MOHSEN

from Shatila camp, Lebanon. Studying for Master of Public Health, Cardiff University

I love everything about life in Wales and studying at Cardiff University, especially the architecture of the university buildings and how healthy

the city is compared to Shatila refugee camp in Beirut.

I really enjoy my course. The subjects are really well taught and the material is useful. Through the modules I have learned how to manage outbreaks of infections, organise healthcare systems

and services with a 'team work' mentality, and respond appropriately to disasters and crises. I have already shared a lot of what I learned with colleagues back in Lebanon. I have really enjoy studying and I am sad that time is running out for me in Cardiff!



MANAR JABER

from Bethlehem, Palestine. Studying MSc Rehabilitation, Oxford Brookes University

By studying for my Masters I hoped to update my knowledge in paediatric physiotherapy and rehabilitation and benefit from sharing experiences with

other students, but I have gained so much more. The course has given me a whole new way of seeking knowledge, teaching me critical skills and the importance of evidence-based practice.

I have had the chance to meet many different people from varied

backgrounds, which has enriched my understanding of the different cultures and beliefs of the many people from around the world attending Oxford Brookes with me.



HEALTHCARE DENIED

ATTACKS AND DELAYS TO AMBULANCES IN THE WEST BANK

In order to access appropriate care it is sometimes necessary for Palestinian patients from the West Bank and Gaza to visit hospitals in occupied East Jerusalem, where the main specialist hospitals are situated. For Palestinians without an Israeli-issued Jerusalem ID, this involves applying for a permit from the Israeli authorities, and entering East Jerusalem through a checkpoint.

For these patients, getting through a checkpoint is not a simple process. In a procedure known as 'back-to-back' transfer, the patient travelling in a Palestinian-registered ambulance must be physically moved into an Israeli-registered ambulance. This process causes delays and significant discomfort and medical risk for the patient as they are walked or wheeled between ambulances, sometimes in critical condition.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), the largest provider of ambulance services to Palestinians, records the time it takes for patients to transfer through these checkpoints on a central database.

In partnership with Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI), MAP collated these statistics. We found that in emergency cases, the average delay to an ambulance undergoing a back-to-back transfer is 27 minutes, and in some cases over an hour. This puts patient health at risk.

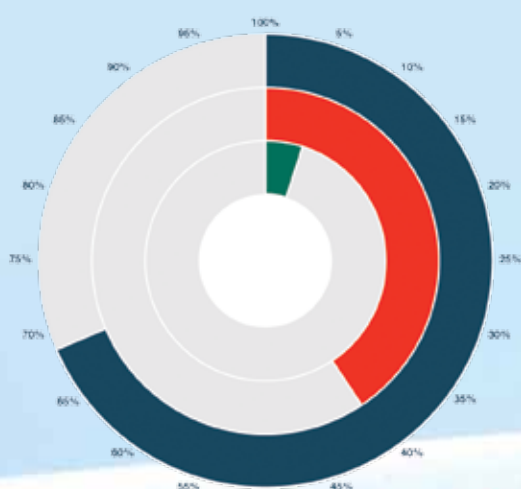
The PRCS also records any incidents which occur relating to its work, such as attacks on medics or denial of access to injured people. During the violence which hit the West Bank starting at the end of last year, they logged hundreds of cases of attacks against paramedic teams from Israeli security forces and settlers, causing damage to ambulances and numerous injuries.

It is essential for the well-being and right to health of Palestinians that ambulances are given free access to hospitals and medical crews are able to undertake their work unimpeded by harassment or violence. This year MAP has raised the issue of 'back-to-back' transfers and violations against Palestinian ambulances at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, and we continue to call for the end to these practices

ACCORDING TO THE PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY (PRCS), SINCE THE 3RD OCTOBER 2015 ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES AND SETTLERS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR:



IMPACT OF BACK-TO-BACK TRANSFERS AT CHECKPOINTS:
PERCENTAGE OF CASES DELAYED FOR OVER 15 MINUTES.



68%

BACK-TO-BACK NON-EMERGENCIES

41%

BACK-TO-BACK TRANSFER EMERGENCIES

5%

DIRECT TRANSFER EMERGENCIES



MAP COMMUNITY INSPIRING WAYS TO SUPPORT MAP



Our work is only made possible thanks to the incredible support we get from individuals like you. Whether it's running, cycling or hosting an event, there are countless ways people are helping to raise money and awareness about MAP and the work being done for the Palestinian right to health.



CYCLING: LONDON TO JERUSALEM

After witnessing the conditions of Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon last year, physiotherapist Rahma Barclay was inspired to do something to help the people she had met. *"I am from a medical profession and hold deeply the belief in healthcare for all."* Rahma will lead a group of intrepid MAP supporters on a sponsored cycling tour across 13 countries and covering 3,500 km in 35 days this September.

SUPPORT OVER THE YEARS

Sue Cooke is one of MAP's most dedicated supporters. She has organised countless events for MAP including a Come & Sing performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Ripon Cathedral raising over £5,000, to speaking events, a ceilidh, film shows and running in the York 10k race, twice! Why is supporting MAP important to Sue?



I am from a medical profession and hold deeply the belief in healthcare for all."

Rahma Barclay

"Like the most effective development charities, MAP works alongside the Palestinian people helping them bring about the vital changes they need living under tragic conditions. For me, it is a great privilege to fundraise for MAP, and to leave a legacy in my will, as I expect MAP's support will continue to be needed for many years to come."

LANCASTER: 100 DIRECT DEBITS FOR GAZA

Inspired by the compassion and generosity shown by the people of Lancaster following the attacks on Gaza in 2014, Paul Speight set an ambitious target to get 100 people to give £5 a month to MAP. *"I felt we needed to do something more to provide real, practical help."*



COME DINE WITH US

Wanting to do something different, Vicki Magee and her friend Eileen organised a Middle Eastern 'Come Dine with Us' dinner party. With support from her local community in Youghal, Ireland they raised €500 for MAP and fed 16 people.



MULTI-MARATHON RUNNING CHALLENGE



Ibrahim Jalloh is taking on the ultimate challenge: running seven races for MAP. His fundraising won't stop until he has completed the Cardiff half-marathon, Berlin half-marathon, London Marathon, Oslo Trail Run, BUPA 10k, Brussels half-marathon and the Valencia Marathon, all in 2016. *"I know for a fact coming from a war torn country that living with the loss of family, friends and homes can be devastating for anyone, especially children. This is where MAP has been a saving grace offering special support programmes to children to help them cope."*

These are just a few examples of the ways people have shown their support for MAP. We are so grateful for all of the effort, time and dedication taken by everyone who supports us!

FEELING INSPIRED TO FUNDRAISE FOR MAP?

Contact our fundraising team at communityfundraising@map-uk.org or call us on 020 7226 4114.

We'd love to hear from you!

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

MAP PATRON FADI KASSIS



Fadi Kassis is the CEO and Founder of Forte Securities Limited, which has offices in London, Dubai and Australia. He has been donating through his company since 2010.

Fadi became a Patron of Medical Aid for Palestinians in 2013, pledging multi-year support as part of our President's Circle giving scheme. In addition to his pledge, in 2015 his company sponsored MAP's Cycle Palestine Bike Ride – and two of his employees also completed the ride!

MAP INTERVIEW

Could you tell us a bit about your company, Forte Securities?

Forte is a UK Financial Services company involved in wholesale inter-dealer markets. We started in London but are now expanding in other regions globally, with offices in Dubai and Australia.

How did you first become involved with the Palestinian issue?

Being a Palestinian myself, since 1979 – the year of my birth!

How did you hear about the work of MAP?

MAP is widely known across Palestine, Lebanon and the greater Middle East region. My own exposure in MAP came while seeking ways to make charitable contributions as a company.

Is there a specific MAP project which impresses you or is close to your heart?

The mobile health clinic serving vulnerable communities throughout the occupied Jordan Valley. This clinic makes sure that primary medical services get to those people who are

living in remote areas across Palestine, and would otherwise struggle to access the care they need.

Forte's sponsorship of our 2015 Cycle Palestine bike ride through the West Bank was a great way to show support to MAP – how were your staff impacted by the partnership?

It was a life changer for our staff! Two of my team had the pleasure of doing the ride, along with many others.



What would you say to other companies who might have the capacity to sponsor but are uncertain about the benefits?

Less thought more action! The time has come to bring down the walls, not sit on them!



Why did you choose to support MAP?

MAP is an amazing charity. It has an excellent standing and profile, and does fantastic work. I value the years of hard work that MAP staff and volunteers have carried out. They have contributed their lives for the benefit of our people, and for that we can only be supportive and thankful.

How well do you feel you understand the work that you are funding?

I keep a close liaison with MAP staff to understand how their projects, financing and work is being undertaken. This transparency is key and we value MAP's capacity to keep people informed.

"MAP is an amazing charity. It has an excellent standing and profile, and does fantastic work. I value the years of hard work that MAP staff and volunteers have carried out."

Fadi Kassis

To find out more about becoming a Patron of MAP, please contact paul.julien@map-uk.org

To learn about our corporate sponsorship opportunities, contact alice.watts@map-uk.org

Thank you!



MAP NEWS

■ PARLIAMENTARIANS WITNESS OCCUPATION IN WEST BANK

 @MAPCampaigns

Visiting Palestinian villages threatened with demolition by Israel in the South Hebron hills today with @BtSIIsrael



MAP and our partners Caabu have supported two cross-party delegations of MPs and peers to the Occupied West Bank so far this year. The parliamentarians visited a number of MAP protects, including MAP's mobile health clinic in the Jordan Valley, and the burns unit we support in Nablus.

Both delegations were hosted by the Bedouin community of Jabal al Baba, a community where 49 Palestinians were later made homeless by Israeli house demolitions in May.

 @StewartWood

Tonight we enjoyed the wonderful food, hospitality & music of Bedouin families on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem



■ MAP HIGHLIGHTS LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ATTACKS ON HEALTH SERVICES IN GAZA

In February this year we visited each of the families and medical professionals affected by the attacks in 2014 covered in our No More Impunity report. With little progress towards independent investigation or accountability for these attacks so far, MAP and our partners the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights and Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights continue to pursue a UN process to seek redress for attacks on health personnel.

We presented an update on the cases from our report at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where 32 states supported the establishment of a mechanism to ensure the implementation of efforts by Israel and Palestine towards accountability.

■ MORE CELEBRITIES JOIN OUR #WITHGAZA CAMPAIGN

Long-time MAP supporter, actor Juliet Stevenson, and journalist and author Yasmin Alibhai-Brown have joined MAP's call to end the blockade in Gaza, and the cycle of conflict which continues to blight Palestinian lives there.



■ PETITION: SAVE THE BADU KA'ABNE KINDERGARTEN

As the rate of demolitions and evictions by Israel continues to escalate in the West Bank, MAP has highlighted the threat of demolition faced by a kindergarten in the Bedouin community of Badu Ka'abne. MAP provided this kindergarten with stationery and other school supplies last year, and provides the surrounding community with health services through our mobile clinic.

As the Head Teacher recently told MAP, for children here "education is the only way to get away from this life and to move on to something better." If this EU-funded kindergarten is demolished, the youngest children of Badu Ka'abne will have no place to learn.

SIGN THE PETITION: map-uk.org/kindergarten



■ MAP SUPPORTERS CALL ON THE UK TO PROTECT PALESTINIAN REFUGEES FROM SYRIA

Before the conflict in Syria began in March 2011 around 560,000 registered Palestinian refugees lived in the country. Following five years of civil war, more than half of these people have lost their homes, and nearly all are in dire need of aid. Over 3,000 Palestinians have died as a result of the war.

MAP is urging the UK government to ensure that its humanitarian response to the conflict in Syria provides equal protection for all refugees, including Palestinians.

SIGN THE PETITION: map-uk.org/syria



Donate online at

www.map-uk.org

Or call today on

020 7226 4114



Follow MAP on Twitter @MedicalAidPal and Facebook www.facebook.com/MedicalAidforPalestinians

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