

## Resolution 5 – 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly Resolution to Support Humanitarian aid to Palestinians through the East Jerusalem Hospitals including Augusta Victoria Hospital

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WHEREAS, we followers of Christ are called by God in our baptismal covenant to work for justice and peace on the earth; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 ELCA Advocacy Policy Priorities includes a commitment to “... work to build broad support for international development and humanitarian aid in Congress. Specifically, we will: • Advocate to bolster funding levels to international poverty-focused programs as appropriate in the International Affairs budget; • Oppose efforts by Administration or Congress to cut funds to these programs...”; and

WHEREAS, The United States Government has historically provided direct aid to the Palestinian Authority, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and other agents; and

WHEREAS, This aid was severely cut in 2018, and as a result of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act legislation enacted in 2018, which amends that Anti-Terrorism Act. The Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act as written may result in no aid being provided to the Palestinian people by the United States in the future and have a devastating effect on life-saving services affecting over 5 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; and

WHEREAS, One of the institutions directly affected by the cuts is Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), a program of the Lutheran World Federation, which is a center of medical excellence in East Jerusalem, providing specialty care for all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza that is not available in other hospitals; and

WHEREAS, For several years AVH and other East Jerusalem hospitals have been facing cash-flow problems because the Palestinian Authority has not been able to pay the bills of the patients which it refers to these hospitals, with total debt for the six hospitals at \$80 million as of March 1, 2019, with AVH debt of \$35 million; and

WHEREAS, in FY2017, \$25 million in US funding was appropriated by Congress for the hospitals but later repurposed by the Administration and therefore permanently lost to the hospital; and

WHEREAS, future funding is now in doubt because of restrictions placed on aid by the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly urge congregations and members of congregations to support the ELCA’s advocacy effort in support of restored funding for Augusta Victoria Hospital and other members of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network by urging the Administration to release the allocated funds for AVH and the others in the EJHN on a humanitarian basis to save lives, and by contacting the White House directly (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> or 202-456-1111) to urge that humanitarian aid to the West Bank and Gaza, especially assistance for the East Jerusalem hospitals, be released immediately and unconditionally to ensure ongoing care for cancer patients and others who need life-saving medical treatment.

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***Submitted by Milwaukee Clusters 1 and 2***

Adopted by Greater Milwaukee Synod Council Action **SA19.06.26**. on **June 1, 2019**.