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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Thanks to EU Support for the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network
two more hospitals achieve Joint Commission International Accreditation***

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hospital/Jerusalem and Makassed Hospital have been awarded the three-year Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation for quality and patient safety. The Joint Commission is a US-based organization that has established patient safety and quality service standards and goals for health service facilities. This accomplishment is a significant milestone for the Palestinian healthcare system which provides further evidence for the safety and quality of services.

Over the last four years, the East Jerusalem Hospitals (EJHs) have been preparing their facilities for JCI accreditation. The Joint Commission conducts site visits to facilities to evaluate the implementation of their standards. Successful facilities receive a three-year accreditation. The facilities within the East Jerusalem Hospital Network (EJHN) are the first in Palestine to endeavor to achieve this goal. In June 2013, St. John Eye Hospital and Augusta Victoria Hospital, member facilities within the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, also achieved the three year JCI accreditation.

"This is a remarkable achievement demonstrating the enormous efforts made in improving patient care and safety through the joint work of the East Jerusalem Hospitals network. This is also a clear message that Palestinian health professionals, despite the many challenges they face, can achieve international standards of excellence in healthcare," said the EU Representative John Gatt-Rutter. "Our work with East Jerusalem Hospitals is crucial. The East Jerusalem Hospitals are among the few Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem that are still operational and able to provide services to the Palestinian community. As such the hospitals represent the backbone of the Palestinian health system as half of their patients come from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to receive a range of services not available elsewhere in Palestine. "

Dr. Abdallah Sabri, president of the board of trustees of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hospital/Jerusalem (PRCSH) and vice president of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, added, "The achievement of the staff at PRCSH, Makassed Hospital, St. John Eye Hospital, and Augusta Victoria Hospital provides a strong indication of the high level of technical and practical capacity in health service delivery and the assurance of quality and safe care to the patients. We thank the World Health Organization for providing over the last three years intense training and continuous consultation and coaching from various health quality experts. We also thank the European Union for providing the financial support to cover the costs to prepare our facilities to achieve the JCI accreditation. We are dedicated to maintaining this level of quality and safe care and to strive to continuously improve to meet new patient safety and quality standards and goals."

The East Jerusalem Hospitals serve as the main centers for specialized care within the Palestinian health system. Patients needing services and procedures not available in the West

Bank and Gaza are referred for treatment in the EJHN facilities by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Over half of the EJHN's patients are referrals from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The EJHN and its six facilities have been supported by the European Union and the World Health Organization (WHO) for the last four years. In the course of the latest phase of this programme the EU provided EUR2,4 million to improve the quality of health services in the hospitals and upgrade their status to the highest international standards (ISO certification and most recently, Joint Commission International¹ accreditation). In order to prepare the hospitals for JCI accreditation, WHO facilitated various training opportunities including direct training from JCI, and on-site consultations by JCI mock surveyors and external quality professionals. In addition, WHO facilitated regular meetings and workshops among the EJHN quality coordinators and their teams to promote an environment of joint learning and information-sharing among the member facilities of the network.

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¹ The JCI is a US based organization that has established patient safety and quality service standards and goals for health service facilities