



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

U.N. Human Rights Council – 54th regular session

**Item 7 – Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories
General Debate**

Statement by Mr Yannick GALEAZZI, First Secretary

Wednesday 4th October 2023, Geneva

Mr President,
Mr High Commissioner,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta is deeply preoccupied by the increased violations of human rights in Palestine and other occupied territories, in particular with regard to medical and humanitarian access to populations in need, as well as the right to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of worship.

In the past months, medical access has been severely impeded by added roadblocks, checkpoints, preventing ambulances trying to reach patients in need of critical care. Attacks against medico-social and humanitarian centres and staff are also on the rise.

The Holy Family Hospital, our maternity and critical care facility, in Bethlehem cares for thousands of Palestinians each year, including through its Mobile Medical Unit, for patients in remote areas. However, its life-saving activities have been severely obstructed due to current restrictions and insecurity. We consequently call for unrestricted access to health care, ensuring the safety of medical staff and patients.

Mr President,

The Order of Malta condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent attacks against places of worship, including many Christian churches, clergy and faithful. We therefore call on the Authorities to better protect places of worship and pilgrims, so that people may practice their faith free from violence or intimidation.

All of those issues were highlighted by our Permanent Observer to the U.N. in New York during the recent Security Council “Open Debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question”.



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In conclusion, the Sovereign Order of Malta urges all Parties involved to respect the fundamental principles of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, as the core basis to finding a peaceful solution.

Thank you.