



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

Human Rights Council – 57th session

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

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann, Permanent Observer

2nd October, 2024

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta is deeply shocked by the grave violations of International humanitarian and human rights law, as well as the disastrous humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories affecting our relief efforts in the region.

The Order of Malta calls for the respect, in all circumstances, of the fundamental principles of humanitarian assistance : Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence. The constant threat of violence and lack of access experienced by relief workers is unacceptable. The protection of civilian populations and aid workers must be guaranteed, including freedom of movement.

Our maternity in Bethlehem, the Holy Family Hospital, and its mobile clinics in the West Bank provide essential services to the local population, but face many challenges and patients in need of critical care cannot be reached. Our medico-social and humanitarian projects focus on the most vulnerable, especially women and children, who are suffering due to food insecurity and the lack of access to clean water and electricity.

The Order of Malta, in partnership with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, was able to deliver vital relief supplies to the affected population in Northern Gaza. We are planning for the delivery of additional aid to Gaza in the coming months. Arrangements are also underway to create facilities for the provision of medical care on the ground.

Mr. President,

We express our gravest concern regarding the increased violations of the right to the freedom of religion or belief. Places of worship are desecrated and religious leaders are regularly assaulted.

In conclusion, the Sovereign Order of Malta calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the release of hostages, so as to ensure access to basic resources and alleviate the suffering of civilians.

Thank you.