June 17 2020, Jerusalem – A substantial delivery of personal protective equipment and medical items was supplied today by the European Union and the World Health Organization to the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network (EJHN) to support preparedness for COVID-19.

At the hand over event at Augusta Victoria Hospital, the European Union's Representative Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff said: "These medical supplies and protective equipment made possible through EU humanitarian aid are essential to support all six hospitals in the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network. It will enable the staff to be safe and prepared to receive and manage suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients from East Jerusalem. Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network has been operating under difficult conditions, so we hope this delivery will help and strengthen their preparedness efforts."

The delivery includes personal protective equipment and disinfectant items for all six of the network's hospitals including 56,000 pairs of gloves; 10,000 surgical gowns and 1,600 overall gowns and 2,050 shoe covers and 100 medical protective goggles; 6,000 N-95 masks and 115,000 surgical masks and 4,100 face shields; 6,300 bottles of alcogel; 120 thermometers and 200 bottles of alcohol for disinfectant plus disinfectant spray and wipes.

"The East Jerusalem hospitals are crucial referral institutions for the Palestinian health system, they need to be commended for their preparedness efforts to date. This supply delivery, generously supported by the European Union, will contribute to protect front line health workers and allow for appropriate clinical management of COVID-19 patients", said Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, head of WHO's office for the occupied Palestinian territory.

The needs of the EJHN were a priority in the United Nations Inter-agency COVID-19 Response Plan released in April 2020. This EU contribution is part of an EU humanitarian aid grant that helps WHO scale up the capacity of Palestine's health system for testing, case management and infection prevention and control in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

In the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network, the two main hospitals with isolation preparedness

measures to receive COVID-19 patients are Al-Makassed Islamic Charity Hospital and St. Joseph Hospital, while Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) has prepared an isolation wing to receive cases from within the hospital. AVH will additionally receive other patients, providing backup capacity. In total, 50 beds are assigned for COVID-19 patients. The network's other hospitals (St. John, Princess Basma and Palestine Red Crescent) are prepared to support the network with medical and nursing staff. To date (as of June 16), there have been 184 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in East Jerusalem, including 2 deaths.

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