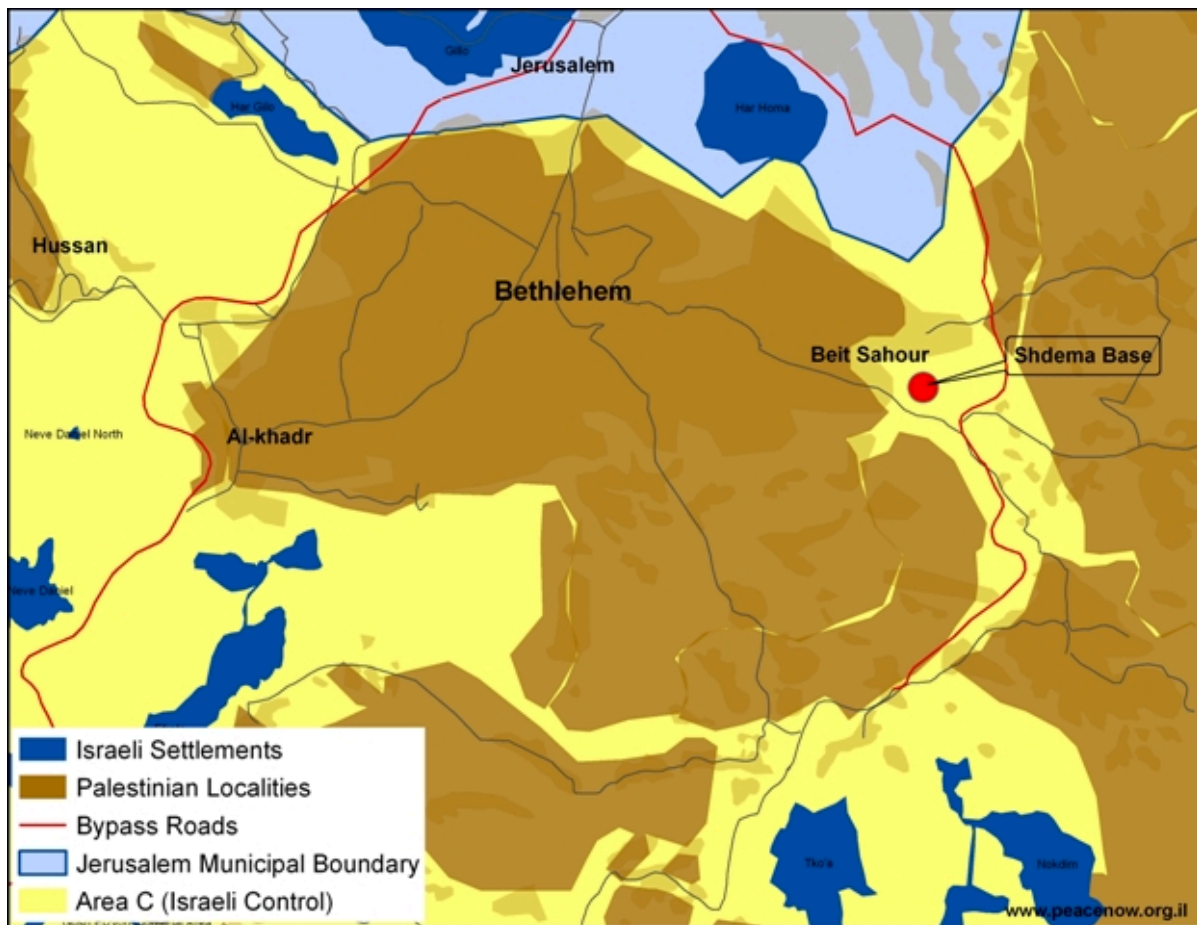


[View in Browser](#)

Sumud Action Alert:

Settlement Construction in Beit Sahour

Dear Sumud Community,

In this season of Advent, we often remember the shepherds who saw an important sign of Christ's coming: a star. Today, ELCA Sumud writes to you with an urgent advocacy opportunity about the little town where those shepherds are believed to see this star: Beit Sahour.

Here's what you need to know:

- Beit Sahour has around 15,000 residents
- 80% of Beit Sahour's residents are Christian
- The ELCA's partner church, **the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)**, has a church and a K-12 school in this town, which serve both Christians and Muslims.
- This month, a new settlement began construction behind an area of Beit Sahour called Osh Ghurab. This settlement would be called "**Shdema**", and its construction would significantly endanger the lives of all 15,000 residents of Beit Sahour.
- **Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law.**
- Schdema is proposed to be built on legally owned Palestinian land, and **its construction necessitates dispossession of legal Palestinian landowners** who have nowhere else to go.
- The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) cites **757 settler attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank since January 2025**, a 13% increase from 2024 statistics.
 - These attacks constitute assaults, destruction of property, and intimidation. **The majority of settlers who carry out**

these crimes do so with impunity.

Just as the shepherds in Beit Sahour 2,000 years ago bore witness to Christ's birth, **we the international community are called to witness today.**

As ELCA members we hold a church-to-church relationship with the ELCJHL, whose presence in Beit Sahour is historic and includes their Lutheran church and Lutheran K-12 school. This settlement's construction directly impacts our Lutheran siblings in Christ in Beit Sahour and the wider Bethlehem area, as well as the thousands of Muslim neighbors they call neighbors, coworkers, students, teachers, and dear friends. **Please use your voice to express your concern and uplift the humanity and rights of the residents of Beit Sahour—Christian and Muslim—who all have a right to live on their land, go to their schools, churches and mosques, and live amongst their community in peace and safety.**

ELCA Sumud and WiS MENA invite you to use the following **script** to address your Senators and/or Representatives to bring this crucial story to their attention:

Dear [Representative/Senator],

I [write to/call] you with sincere urgency and concern. As an ELCA Lutheran, my church has a direct relationship with Lutherans in Palestine and Israel. Many of those Lutherans live in a town called Beit Sahour. This town, where Christians believe the shepherds saw the star before Christ's birth, is one of the last majority Christian towns in the Holy Land. The Lutheran School of Beit Sahour and Lutheran Church in Beit Sahour serve hundreds of Christians and Muslims every day.

An illegal settlement called "Shdema" is planned for construction in Beit Sahour. Its proposed location poses threats of annexation,

movement restrictions, land dispossession, loss of livelihood, and settler violence.

I implore you to voice opposition to this illegal settlement and draft a resolution, or letter to the Secretary of State and President Trump, through which the United States Government calls on the Israeli Government to stop the illegal construction of this settlement and remove all settlers or settlement infrastructure from the land in support of the safety of Beit Sahour's residents. President Trump in his 20-point peace plan clearly identifies progression toward Palestinian statehood and self-determination as necessary to the peace process, and U.S. underwriting of settler expansion diminishes that potential. President Trump has furthermore made it clear that "annexation is not on the table" when it comes to the West Bank.

The Christian presence in the Holy Land is already endangered. This settlement would add to the plethora of reasons Palestinian Christians are leaving their homeland and not coming back. As a Christian myself, I express my utmost horror and fear at the danger indigenous Christians in the Holy Land face in today due to illegal settler expansion. I urge you to express your concern and uplift the humanity of the residents of Beit Sahour—Christian and Muslim—who all have a right to live on their land, go to their schools, churches and mosques, and live amongst their community in peace and safety.

Thank you for your time.

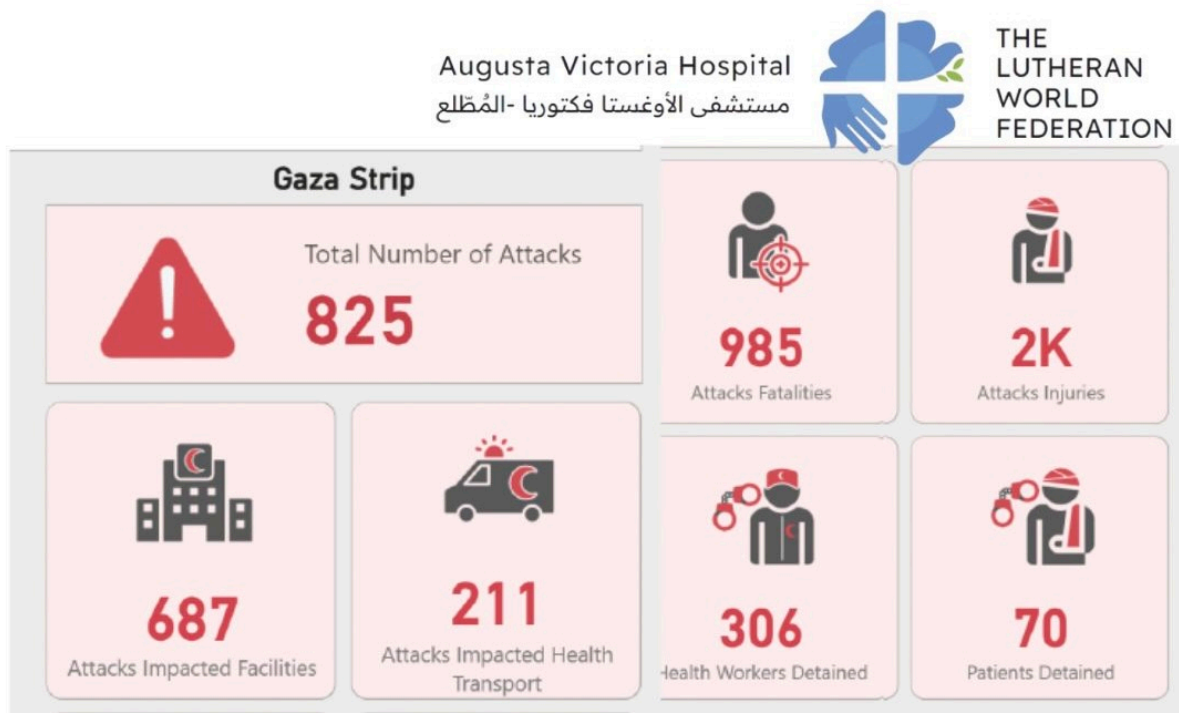
Sincerely,

[Name]

[Find Your Representative Here](#)

[Find Your Senator Here](#)

Augusta Victoria Hospital Update



[Full AVH Update Here](#)

UNWRA Update

Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC)'s director Christine Mangale was quoted in the below article about the necessity for UNWRA in the restoration and path to justice and peace in Gaza. Read below!

[UNWRA Article Here](#)



(photo courtesy of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI)

ELCA Sumud wishes you a Merry Christmas and blessed Advent season. Look out for our Quarterly newsletter next month, as well as many new opportunities to engage in advocacy, awareness-building, and accompaniment for justice in Palestine and Israel in the coming year. Have you checked out our Advent series and Christmas Children's Book? Click the link below to incorporate Sumud in your Advent season.

Peace and justice,

ELCA Sumud

2025 ELCA Sumud Advent Series and Christmas Picture Book





You have received this email as a member or supporter of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

© Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 W. Higgins Rd.
Chicago, IL 60631-4101
800-638-3522

[Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Donate](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)