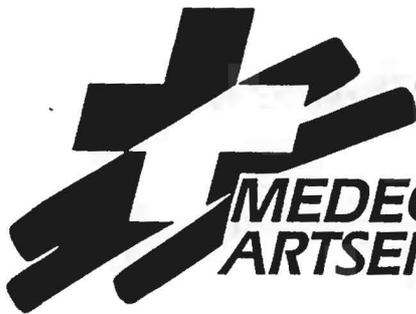


BELGIUM

Ru. Deschampsheleerstraat, 24
Bruxelles 1080 Brussel

tel 2 425 03 00
fax 2 425 34 60
tlx 63607 MSF B
ccp-pcr 000-0000060-60



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Dr Geneviève Begkoyian
MSF Belgrade

to Mr Nicholas Morris,
UNHCR Special Envoy, Zagreb

Subject: Blockade of MSF programs in the enclaves.

Belgrade, Monday 6 September 1993

Sir,

The UNHCR, NPA and UNPROFOR visit of last week renewed the hope of Srebrenica. Now the rain has started and the people are still waiting for the convoys to bring shelter materials. After one year of war, the fear of another long and harsh winter further stresses the already weakened population. Despite many promises, only wheat flour is arriving. Essentials for the winter such as salt, repair materials, cement for the water system, clothing, and shoes, are still just promises. The tension and anxiety of the population are growing. Their survival is entirely dependent on the timely arrival of international aid. This aid is dependent on the good will of the Serbian authorities in Pale, and the Sanctions Committee in New York.

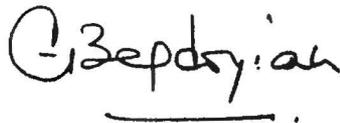
After two weeks of negotiations with the Pale authorities, MSF is facing a complete refusal to bring any material other than medical supplies into the enclaves. Because of this continuing series of delays and refusals from the Pale authorities, the MSF program in Srebrenica, as well as in Gorazde, is blocked. The necessary materials for the first phase of our rehabilitation project for 2,000 refugees in Srebrenica have been purchased and are currently stored in Belgrade. The Pale authorities (MOH as well as the Commission Board for Humanitarian Aid) request an equivalent MSF program on the Serbian side, in the so-called "Serbian enclaves". MSF is pursuing a balanced program based on needs. We are distributing basic drugs and surgical materials to the Serbian hospitals in Eastern Bosnia, and we are conducting exploratory missions in Trnovo, Sokolac, Petrovac as the Pale authorities have requested. However, we do not envision a large shelter program in the Serb areas. As the single implementing partner of UNHCR that is active in the enclaves, I urgently request your support in our negotiations in Pale. It appears that the UNHCR, NPA and UNPROFOR visit was conducted without considering the Serbian reaction to a winterisation program in the enclaves. We feel the Serbian refusal to MSF is the first reaction to this winterisation program on Bosnian side. A balanced program must be pursued by another agency or significant pressure must be placed on the Pale authorities, if we are to have any success in the enclaves.

Further to this, logistic support for the enclaves is significantly hampered by the embargo against Serbia. Any request to the sanction committee in New York requires a 2 months delay for approval. A current example is that when the UN officials visited the Srebrenica hospital, they were surprised that we were washing gauze bandages to reuse. This item is not available in Belgrade because our request has been blocked in New York since the 19th of June 1993. The threat of infection from this practice is significant, but there remains little choice. There is significant irony in that the Serb authorities will allow medicines into the UN protected areas, but the Sanctions Committee will not!

Because promises of shelters were expressed, because convoys are not bringing an adequate food ration to the refugees, because children did not receive shoes or clothes in sufficient quantity before the winter, because new shipments of medical supplies have yet not arrive, the Srebrenica population is doubtful the international aid community will fulfil their mandate. Security of our representatives, MSF as well as UNHCR and ICRC, may be threatened, if progress is not made soon.

We seek the strong support of your office on these two critical problems, the stalled Pale negotiations and the sanctions clearance of our essential materials. I remain hopeful that you can assist.

With warm regards,



Geneviève Begkoyian
MSF Coordinator Belgrade

cc: Karin Landgren, UNHCR Zagreb
MacKay Wolff, UNHCR Zagreb
Jan Erik Linstad, BiH program, UNHCR Belgrade
Alain Devaux, MSF Brussels
Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF Paris