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TO: HCR BELGRADE

COPY TO: MSF BELGRADE
MSF BRUSSELS
MSF PARIS
UN CIVIL AFFAIRS TUZLA
BH COMMAND KISELJAK
LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF SREBRENICA

FROM: MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES
SREBRENICA

ONCE MORE I HAVE TO INFORM YOU ABOUT THE DIFFICULT SITUATION IN WHICH SOME HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS ARE WORKING FOR THE MOMENT IN SREBRENICA. THE TOWN AUTHORITIES SHOW MORE AND MORE DISRESPECT FOR ALL HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITY AND PERSONNEL:

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE RELIEF, ALL MSF PROGRAMS WERE ALWAYS DISCUSSED WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, AND ALWAYS WAS LOOKED FOR A MAXIMUM OF COOPERATION.

HOWEVER, THE AUTHORITIES ARE REFUSING MORE AND MORE THE REGULAR CONTACTS NOW. MEETINGS ARE NOT HELD ANY MORE TO DISCUSS AND PLAN FUTURE ACTIVITIES BUT RATHER TO UTTER FALSE ACCUSATIONS RESULTING FROM A STRONG DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN. DISCREDITING AND INSULTING SOME ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES SEES TO BE THE ONLY GOAL.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE LAST MEETING:

- MSF WAS ACCUSED TO KEEP 480 MATRASSES HIDDEN IN THEIR STORES, A RUMOUR BECAUSE ALL HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED.
- A NEW ARRIVAL OF MSF DRUGS FOR THE HOSPITAL OF SREBRENICA WAS WELCOMED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH THE REFUSAL TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A MEAL TO THE 2 MSF DRIVERS IN THE KITCHEN OF THE HOSPITAL.
- HCR PROVIDED A BIG LOT OF SHOES TO SREBRENICA. MSF ASKED SHOES FOR ITS PEOPLE WORKING ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTENSION OF THE HOSPITAL, THE DEMAND, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE HCR REPRESENTATIVE, WAS INITIALLY REFUSED BY THE AUTHORITIES. THE WORKERS WENT ON STRIKE. AFTER PRESSURE, THE DEMAND WAS APPROVED ,BUT DELAYED. THE REASON FOR THIS WAS THAT THE WORKERS, WHO ARE VOLUNTEERS AMONG THE REFUGEE POPULATION WERE NOT APPROVED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND FOR THAT REASON NOT ENTITLED TO RECEIVE ANY SHOES. THERE COLLEGUES FROM THE TOWN HOUSE RECEIVED ALREADY SHOES. THE MSF WORKERS ARE STILL ON STRIKE AND THE HOSPITAL CANNOT BE FINISHED.

MANY AMONG US ARE DECEIVED BY THE CURRENT SITUATION: MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES IS PRESENT SINCE MARCH IN THE ENCLAVE AND SHARED THE SUFFERING OF THE LOCAL POPULATION. SURGEONS, ANESTHESISTS, DOCTORS AND OTHER MEDICAL PERSONNEL LEFT THE SECURITY OF THEIR COUNTRY TO ASSIST THE EXHAUSTED MEDICAL LOCAL STAFF DURING AND AFTER THE SHELLING.

OTHERS CROSSED THE LINES TO START UP THE WATER SUPPLY OF THE TOWN AND EVEN WHEN THIS LATER ON WAS DESTROYED, A GREAT EFFORT WAS MADE TO RESTORE THE OLD WATER SUPPLY.

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A REHABILITATION PROGRAMME WAS CARRIED OUT TO PROVIDE NEW SHELTER FOR REFUGEES IN THE MOST DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH A SUPPLY LINE WHICH WAS CONTINUOUSLY SABOTAGED BY THE BOSNIAN SERB SIDE.

BEFORE THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS WAS MORE OR LESS GOOD. NOW, THIS COOPERATION HAS BEEN CHANGED FOR A CONTINUOUS SABOTAGE OF ALL RELIEF ACTIVITY WHICH IS NOT COMPLETELY UNDER THEIR CONTROL. THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES DO NOT SEEM TO ACCEPT THAT HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS ARE RECRUITING THEIR OWN PERSONNEL AND THEY WANT TO FORCE THEM ALWAYS TO PASS THROUGH THEIR CHANNELS. THEY WANT ALL RELIEF MATERIAL WHICH ARRIVES IN SREBRENICA TO BE EXCLUSIVELY DISTRIBUTED BY PEOPLE APPOINTED BY THEMSELVES. ALTHOUGH A LOT OF THINGS WENT WRONG IN THEIR OWN DISTRIBUTIONS, EVERY PERSON INVOLVED IN THESE DISTRIBUTIONS ORGANISED BY THE HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS IS THE VICTIM OF A CONTINUOUS DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE HUMANITARIAN AID IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE THE SUBJECT OF AN INTERNAL POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE AND ITS REAL OBJECTIVES ARE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO IT. MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES IS A HUMANITARIAN RELIEF ORGANISATION WHICH PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO ALL PEOPLE IN DISSTRESS. HOWEVER, WE ARE A NON POLITICAL ORGANISATION AND THEREFOR CANNOT ACCEPT ANY POLITICAL MANIPULATION OF ANY OF OUR ACTIONS.

WE THINK THAT THE PROBLEMS FOR THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF SREBRENICA ARE FAR FROM BEING SOLVED. WE WANT TO CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS THE SAME WAY AS WE DID BEFORE BUT ONLY IN A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND COOPERATION.

SINCERELY YOURS
HANS ULENS
COORDINATOR
MSF SREBRENICA

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