

TELEFAX



To : MSF b AND FR
Fm : MSF Amsterdam, Hans van Oort
Date : 11-7-95
Our ref. : 118.BF
Your ref. :
Page : 02 (including cover page)
Attn. : DESKS FORMER YUGOSLAVIA
Subject : SEBRENICA

Di / 507

Max Euweplein 40 tel. (31) 20 52 08 700
P.O.Box 10014 fax. (31) 20 62 05 170
1001 EA Amsterdam telex 10773
The Netherlands e-mail: hq@amssterdam.msf.org

Dear colleagues,

MSF-H is closely following the events happening in Sebrenica. We hope your team is in good condition. Yesterday afternoon MSF-Holland received your press statement about Sebrenica. We regret you have done it in this way, we could have given you much more support in this. Moreover this statement is not in line with previous agreements about cooperation between the sections.

Following remarks might improve our cooperation in this:

1. A few months ago it was confirmed (again!) between MSF-B (Renaud Tockert), MSF-Fr (Pierre Salignon) and MSF-H (Hans van Oort) that any section who wanted to make any public statements about the situation in the Former Yugoslavia would consult the other sections on desk level before doing so. Reason for this is that all sections have staff working in high tension and high security risk area's, on all sides of the frontlines and with all parties involved. Making statements/ advocacy could bring the security of expatriates at risk. Also the continuation of the projects is at risk, as for many transports of staff and material (the enclaves, Bihac, Sarajevo), clearance from serb side is needed. This was proven already a few times, when MSF-H staff was kept in a hostage situation in Banja Luka during the Gorazde crisis last year, when you made statements about Bijelina, and recently when MSF-B/Fr had severe problems with the Pale authorities on which MSF Holland offered its assistance in the negotiations with the Serbs. At different occasions MSF was refused clearance for transports probably due to the MSF image.

I am very sorry that you did not consider this agreement and released a press statement not even informing us before. Again MSF-H had to take precautions for its staff present in Serb area's now.

It is not said however that MSF Holland is against making statements, but that it needs serious consideration before doing so, and that it could involve the (temporarily) suspension of programmes and a hostage risk for expatriates.

2. The other consideration is that MSF could take advantage of the fact that Dutch-Bat is present in Sebrenica. The Dutchbat presence has a very great impact on the Dutch public, and also the Dutch involvement in the RRF. By involving MSF-H in making statements about the situation in the enclave it could have more impact as MSF-H has some influence on the opinion of the Dutch public, and could therefor influence politicians to make more pressure on the UN etc. By only informing us about your statement without involving us in the question which impact you want, an opportunity is missed to increase public awareness in the Netherlands and as a consequence put pressure on the UN.

3. As well with sorrow I saw your annex about the MSF programmes including some MSF-H programmes. Though we supplied you with some info about the MSF-H programmes, in the annex they are notentirely correct represented.

If you make an update of programmes of MSF in Bosnia you had better make sure it is correct and has approval of all sections involved, please check this kind of information prior to release.

Therefor we decided not to forward this annex to the media.

regards,

Hans van Oort
Projectmanager for Bosnia & Hercegovina
MSF Holland