



SUISSE / SCHWEIZ
Rue de Lausanne 78
Case postale 116
CH-1211 Genève 21
Tél.: +41 (22) 849 84 84
Fax: +41 (22) 849 84 88
office-gva@geneva.msf.org
www.msf.ch
CCP 12-100-2

Hello,

At around 2 am on 3 October 2015, an air raid destroyed the central building of the Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, where the intensive care unit was located. To date, at least 30 people have died as a result of the bombing, including 10 patients, 13 members of medical staff and 7 unrecognizable bodies found in the ruins of the hospital, which we have not yet been able to identify. In addition, 27 MSF employees and numerous patients and their companions were wounded.

Despite the repeated requests of MSF for the bombing of the hospital to be stopped, the raid went on for more than an hour. The doctors, nurses and other MSF staff were killed as they worked; patients, some of whom were children, were burned alive in their beds...

The MSF hospital in Kunduz, which had been operational since 2011, was one of the few functioning trauma centres in the north of Afghanistan. Thousands of surgical operations were performed there each year, with the unit also providing essential medical assistance to all patients who needed it. In the week preceding this terrible attack, 394 patients had been treated at the hospital for wounds sustained in the recent clashes in this war-torn province.

Bombing a hospital - whether intentionally or not - is a serious violation of the humanistic values that underpin all humanitarian action. It is also a violation of international humanitarian law. Such attacks are particularly intolerable as they affect the most vulnerable: patients and, more broadly, the people who will no longer have access to essential medical services due to the destruction of medical facilities.

We are still in a state of shock, anger and outrage.

On 3 November, a month after this attack, we want to show our solidarity with the Kunduz team and the MSF mission in Afghanistan, as well as with all patients, staff and medical structures regularly attacked around the world.

More than ever, we want to say "ENOUGH", to bring an end to these violations, which are, directly or indirectly, deadly for the medical teams and the patients in their care, as well as for the thousands of people who will no longer be able to receive care. These attacks are still far too often a daily reality for humanitarian workers and populations in Yemen, Syria, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and elsewhere. We are requesting, loud and clear, for hospitals and access to care to finally receive specific protection under international humanitarian law.

In order to establish the facts, circumstances and intentions behind the bombing of the MSF hospital in Kunduz, MSF has called for an independent investigation by the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC). This appeal for an independent investigation is not a political gesture. We strongly believe that this is a historic opportunity to support the principles of medical humanitarian work and remind the world "that even wars have rules".

We are contacting you to ask you to add your voice to our call for these principles to be respected. Specifically, we invite you to:

- join us at **1 pm on Tuesday 3 November, in Place Neuve, Geneva**, in paying tribute to the victims of this attack in Kunduz, a symbol of the deplorable violations committed in recent conflicts;
- spread our messages far and wide, and rally the support of your networks with power to act in Switzerland and around the world, in favour of respect for the medical humanitarian mission. If we are able to raise sufficient awareness and call to account those responsible, perhaps Switzerland, with its long diplomatic tradition in the field of humanitarian aid, could have a greater influence internationally in defence of medical relief missions and impartial access to care.

Add your voice to ours by, for example, publishing a statement on your association's website and/or sending a letter to a Swiss national media publisher. You can also relay our messages to your members, teams and partners through social media.

Thank you in advance for your actions in solidarity with our teams and, above all, in the name of medical ethics, to defend medical humanitarian work.

Thomas Nierle
President of MSF Switzerland

Bruno Jochum
Director General of MSF Switzerland

