

Médecins Sans Frontières

1971 – 2021

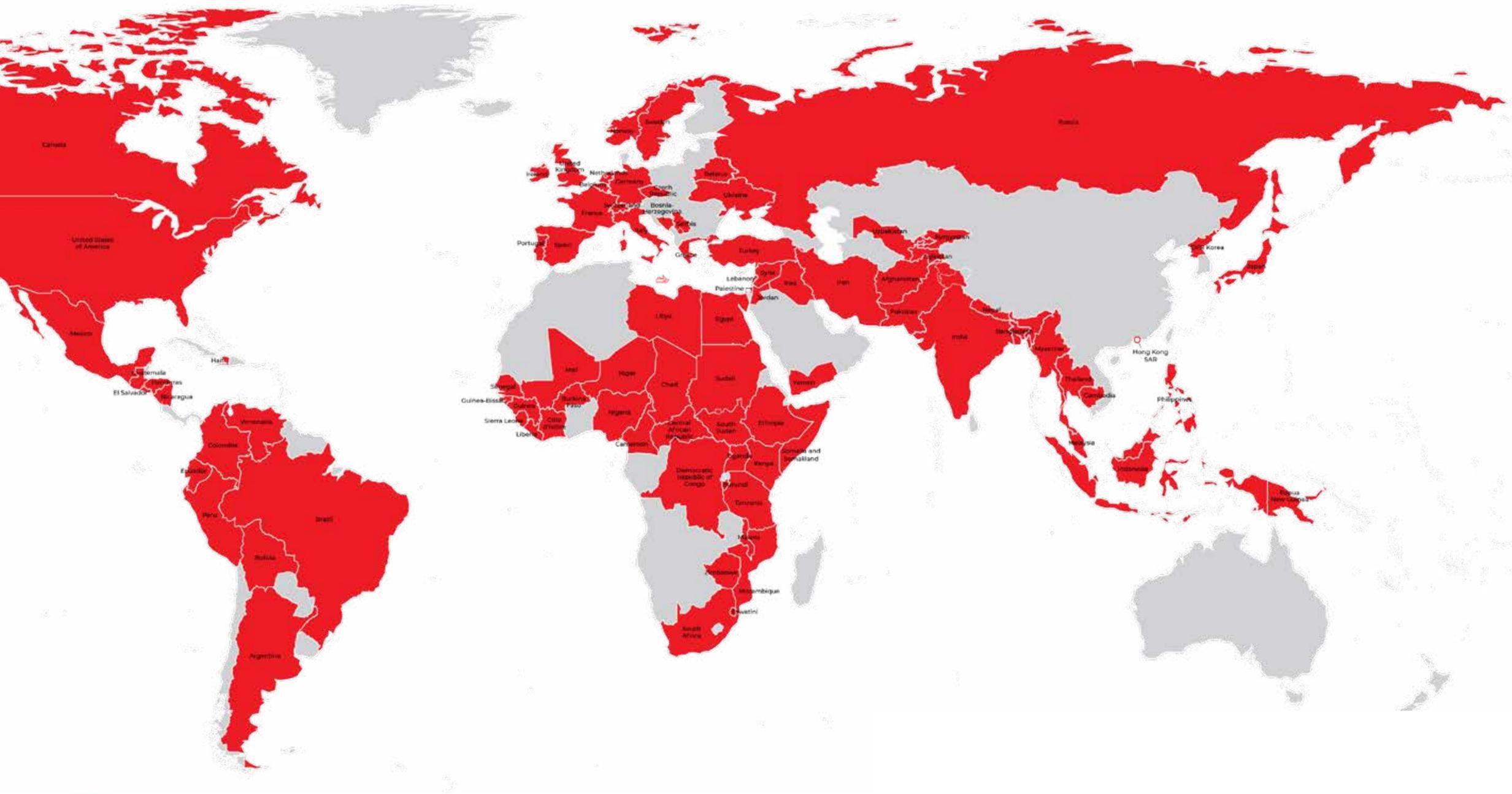
An interactive resource celebrating
50 years of humanitarian action



Tommy Trenchard



An interactive resource containing key information, videos and questions for students on the work of MSF.



Above A map of MSF projects in 2020.

CONTENTS

4-5 What is MSF?	KEY CHAPTERS IN MSF'S HISTORY
A TIMELINE OF MSF HISTORY	28-29 The Birth of MSF
8-9 1971 – 1980	30-31 Ethiopia in 1984
10-11 1981 – 1985	32-33 Rwanda in 1994
12-13 1986 – 1990	34-35 The MSF Access Campaign
14-15 1991 – 1995	36-37 MSF's work with neglected diseases
16-17 1996 – 2000	38-39 The Asian Tsunami
18-19 2001 – 2005	40-41 HIV/AIDS
20-21 2006 – 2011	42-43 The Haiti Earthquake
22-23 2012 – 2016	44-45 The Ebola Virus
24-25 2017 – 2021	46-47 Responding to global migration
	48-49 Search and Rescue at Sea
	50-51 The COVID-19 Pandemic
	52 Contact

Front cover shows baby Nubia, an Ebola survivor. She is pictured here with her medical team, one of whom also survived the virus. Guinea, 2015.

WHAT IS MSF?



Customising prosthetics at the MSF reconstructive surgery hospital, Amman, Jordan, 2018.

Elisa Ottone



MSF hospital in Bangui, Central African Republic, 2021.



MSF staff check quality of the water for refugees, DRC, 2021.

Marco Doneda



MSF is a global medical-humanitarian movement with 45,000 staff working in over 70 countries.

It provides emergency medical care and humanitarian aid to those otherwise unable to access it and to victims of:

- Conflict
- Natural disasters
- Manmade disasters
- Epidemics and pandemics

MSF is independent, neutral and impartial (concepts explored later in this book).

Check out our great [learning resources for schools](#).

Adrienne Surprenant / Collectif ITEM

LEARN MORE



Ambulance team prepares supplies for a medical emergency, El Salvador, 2021.

Alejandra Sandoval



Surgeons at Maroua hospital in Cameroon, 2016.

Pierre Yves Bernard



An MSF logistician organises supplies for mobile clinics in remote areas, South Sudan, 2017.



A TIMELINE OF MSF 1971-2021



1971-1980

Cambodian refugees, five years on, in Thailand, 1980.



Cambodians flee Khmer Rouge

MSF establishes its first large-scale medical programme along the Cambodian/Thai border, during a refugee crisis, providing medical care for Cambodians seeking sanctuary from Pol Pot's rule.

MSF

85 MSF staff set up hospitals in Afghanistan, 1981.



MSF

Vehicle travel is impossible so MSF staff use mules, Afghanistan, 1980.



MSF

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, triggering a war that would last a decade, MSF medical teams secretly cross the Pakistani-Afghan border and travel by mule for several weeks to reach injured civilians living in remote areas.

1971

MSF IS FOUNDED

MSF is founded by a group of French doctors and journalists in the wake of the war and accompanying famine in Biafra, Nigeria, and the floods in eastern Bangladesh (formerly eastern Pakistan). See page 28.

The world's first email is sent in 1971.

1972

Earthquake in Nicaragua

MSF moves quickly to help people affected by the natural disaster.



Cortesía de La Estrella de Nicaragua

Earthquake in Managua, Nicaragua, 1972.

Managua, Nicaragua Earthquake, by marcel.toruno is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The first mobile telephone call is made in April 1973

1974

Hurricane in Honduras

The first MSF project providing long-term medical assistance is opened.



Hurricane Fifi, Honduras, 1974.

Sipa Press

1975

1976

War in Lebanon

MSF teams conduct surgery in MSF's first major project in a war zone.

In 1978 the world's first IVF baby is born in the UK. Her name is Louise Brown.



1977

1978

MSF splits

MSF moves beyond sending isolated doctors into crisis zones in favour of creating a more structured organisation that can provide quality medical services in crises.

One of the co-founders leaves in protest and later founds NGO Médecins du Monde / Doctors of the World.



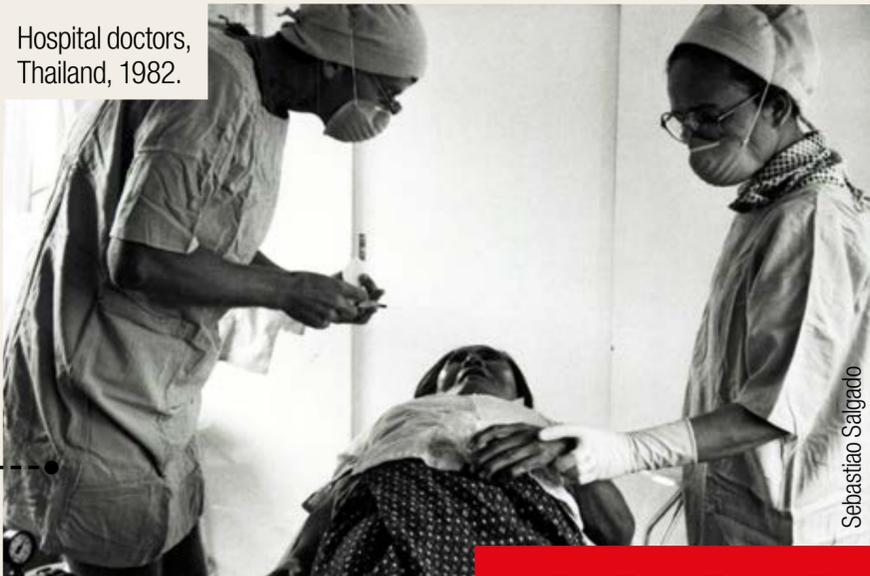
1980

First international appeal

"March for survival" for Cambodia, MSF's first international appeal, is launched.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the first female Head of State in the world is elected President of Iceland in 1980.

1981-1985



Hospital doctors, Thailand, 1982.



MSF surgical centre, Medani, Sudan, 1983.



Mozambique, 1985.

Flying Doctors

MSF delivers medical and nutritional aid to the people of Mozambique by plane.

MSF France is expelled from Ethiopia

by the government after denouncing the hijacking of humanitarian aid and the forced transfers of people.

1981

1982

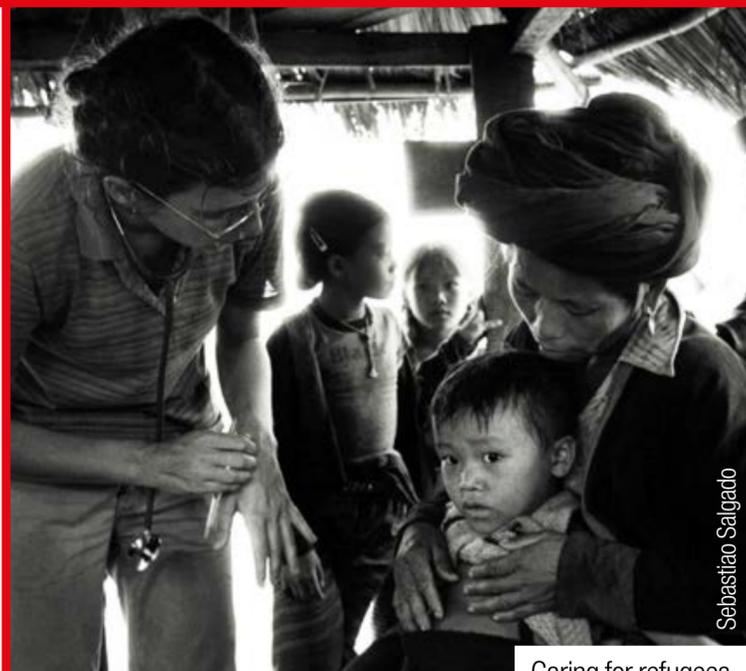
1983

1984

1985

MSF hospitals bombed

Four MSF hospitals are deliberately bombed in Afghanistan.



Caring for refugees, Thailand 1982

Refugees in Thailand

MSF gives support in Nam Yao camp where refugees from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam have fled since 1975.

FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA

MSF starts programmes to treat malnutrition in hunger-stricken regions of Ethiopia. See page 30.



Preparing medical and food supplies, Ethiopia, 1985.



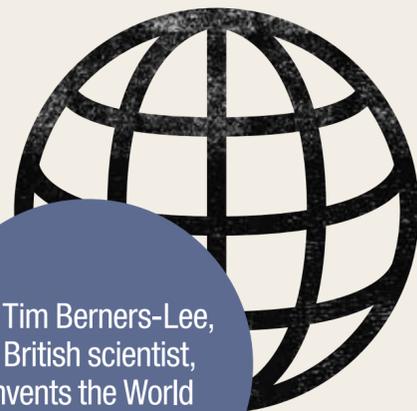
UK's first mobile call on 1 January 1985 in Westminster, London, by Michael Harrison.

1986-1990



MSF hospital ward, Armenia, 1988.

MSF France



Sir Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist, invents the World Wide Web in 1989.

CIVIL WAR IN LIBERIA

MSF teams provide emergency care at the height of the fighting.



Refugees flee to the Ivory Coast, Liberia, 1989.

MSF France

1990

1986

1987

1988

Civil war in Sri Lanka

MSF organises mobile clinics to treat injured citizens in Sri Lanka.

MSF grows in size

MSF now has five headquarter offices, known as sections, in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Geneva and Paris.



The US approves the first medication for AIDS - AZT (zidovudine) - an antiretroviral drug originally used to fight cancer.

Earthquake in Armenia

MSF provides medical care in the Soviet Union following a 6.8 magnitude earthquake which killed 38,000 people.



Destruction caused by earthquake, Armenia, 1988.

MSF France

1989

Iraq attacks Kurds

MSF is the first medical organisation to report on the use of chemical weapons on the Kurdish town of Halabja.

The Berlin Wall comes down on 9 November 1989.

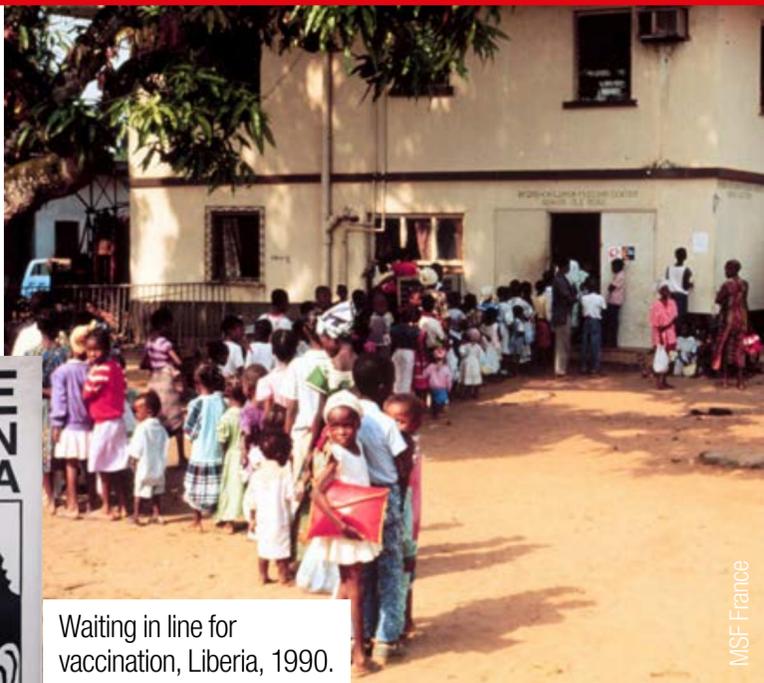


The Berlin Wall, Germany, 1989.

Nelson Mandela is released from prison after 27 years in 1990.



Free Nelson Mandela' poster by HelenSTB is licensed under CC BY 2.0



Waiting in line for vaccination, Liberia, 1990.

MSF France

1991-1995

1991

Emergency in Kurdistan

One of MSF's largest emergency relief projects to date, providing care in Turkey, Iran and Jordan to Kurdish refugees displaced by the Gulf War.



Iraqi Kurdish refugees fleeing to Turkey, 1991.

1992

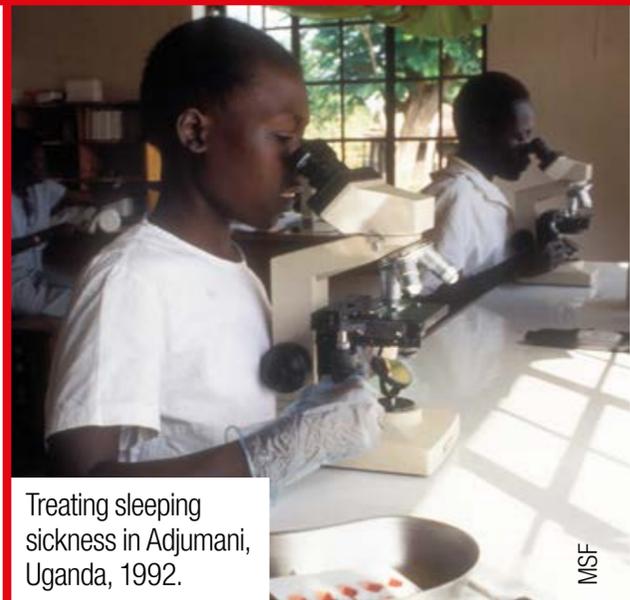
War in Bosnia

Following the ethnic cleansing campaign carried out by Bosnian Serb forces in Eastern Bosnia, MSF provides aid for refugees.

The world's first text message is sent in 1992.



1993



Treating sleeping sickness in Adjumani, Uganda, 1992.

MSF

The Channel Tunnel opens linking the UK and France in 1992.

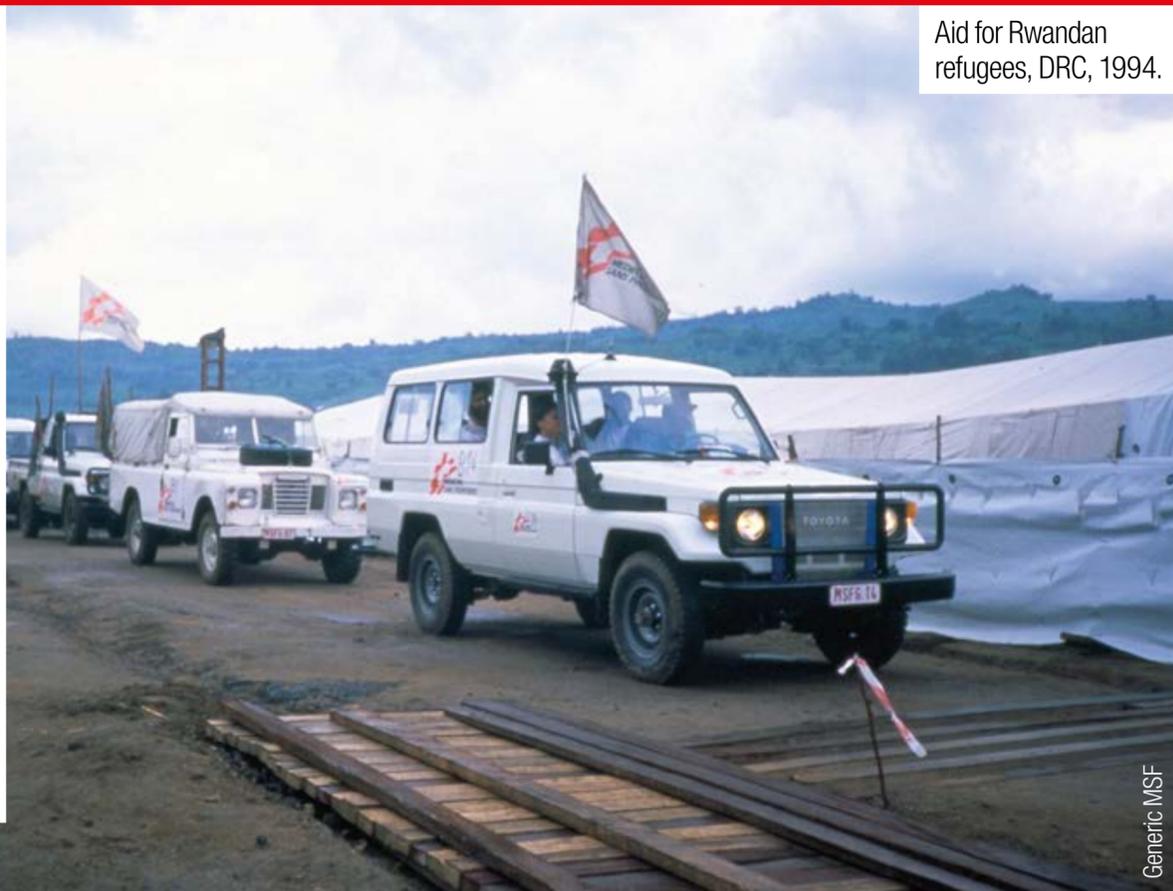
1994

GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

and resulting refugee crisis

MSF remains in Kigali throughout the genocide of more than 800,000 Tutsis (and moderate Hutus) by Hutu militia.

Over a million Rwandan refugees flee the violence to makeshift camps in the neighbouring country of Democratic Republic of Congo. Within days, MSF sets up one of its biggest cholera programmes to date in the camps. See page 32.



Aid for Rwandan refugees, DRC, 1994.

Generic MSF

Apartheid ends in South Africa. Nelson Mandela becomes the first black Head of State in South Africa in 1994.



MSF team supports Srebrenica survivors

MSF teams working in former Yugoslavia witness the fall of the UN protected zone and denounce the subsequent massacre of up to 10,000 civilians by Serbian troops.



Srebrenica by RNW.org is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

1995



1996-2000



Peter van Quaille

Women cultivating the land in Pyongyang, North Korea, 1997.

Famine in North Korea

Unable to ensure that medical aid is reaching the most vulnerable, MSF ends its programmes after three years, but continues to assist refugees fleeing to China.

Launch of Access to Essential Medicines Campaign

With millions dying each year from treatable diseases, MSF starts an international effort to push for increased access to medicines for the world's poor. See page 34.



#MedicinesShouldntBeALuxury



Bluetooth begins to be used in computers and mobile phones in 2000.

Expansion at MSF

MSF has grown in size to 19 sections (offices that run the organisation) around the globe

Crisis in Kosovo

MSF provides humanitarian assistance to refugees.

1999

1996

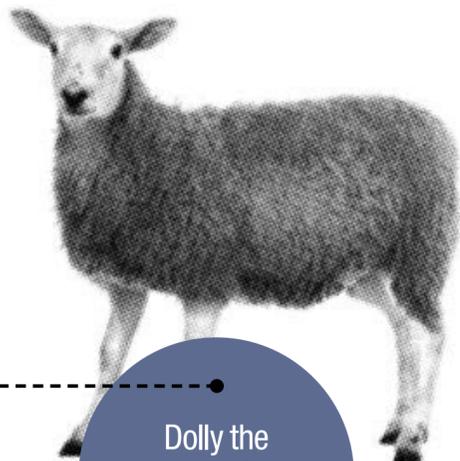
1997

1998

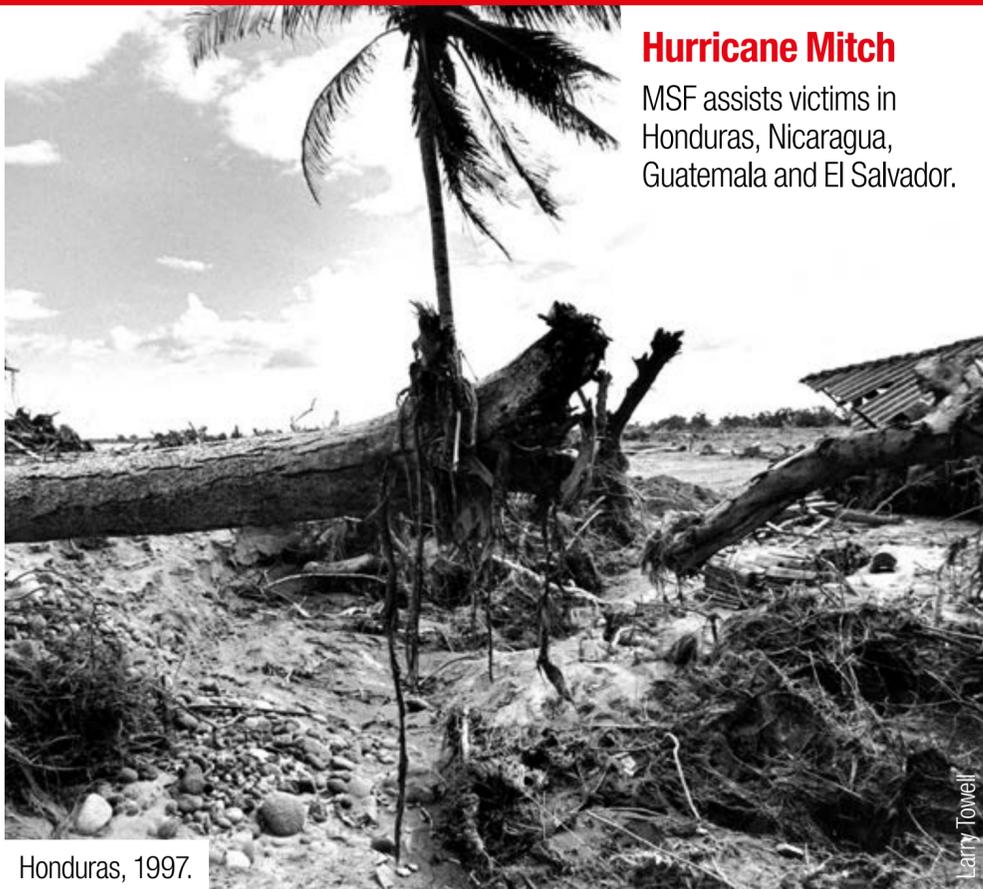
2000

Meningitis in Nigeria

MSF launches a massive vaccination and treatment programme helping 4.5 million people.



Dolly the sheep is cloned in the UK in 1996.



Honduras, 1997.

Larry Towell

Hurricane Mitch

MSF assists victims in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

MSF is awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace and is honoured for its "pioneering humanitarian work on several continents".



Patrick Robert

James Orbinski, MSF International President from 1998 to 2001, gives the acceptance speech, Norway, 1999.

Civil war in Sierra Leone

MSF treats victims of the country's brutal civil war.

FIND OUT MORE

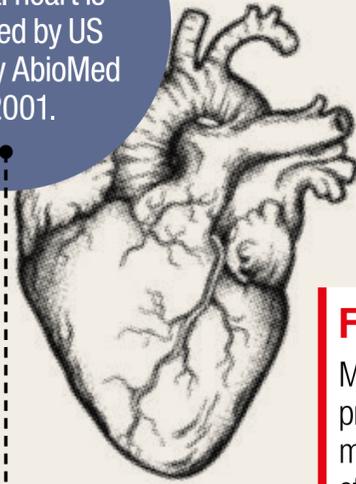
BUILD SPACES OF NORMALCY



[View the acceptance speech here](#)

2001-2005

The world's first artificial heart is produced by US company AbioMed in 2001.



Famine in Angola

MSF runs one of the largest projects in its history, with more than 2,000 members of staff working throughout the country.



DNDi created

MSF is a founding partner of the new organisation, the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative, dedicated to developing medicines for neglected diseases. See page 36.

Todd Buck

The first civil partnership takes place in UK on 5 December 2005.

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

HIV/AIDS pandemic

MSF starts providing antiretroviral therapy to people living with AIDS in: Thailand, Cambodia, Cameroon, Guatemala, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa. See page 40.

Terrorists attack New York, USA, on 11 September 2001.



Jonathan Torgavnik

ARV therapy, South Africa.

Mental health outreach in Peru, 2001.



Bruno de Cock

US invades Iraq

MSF teams remain in Baghdad and challenge the US government on its failure to provide adequate medical care to civilians.



In 2003 Skype is launched making video calls affordable and accessible.

Getting to patients in DRC, 2003.



Carl de Keyzer

Asian tsunami

MSF reacts immediately to the Asian tsunami disaster where 300,000 are killed. £100 million is donated to MSF's appeal by the public. See page 38.

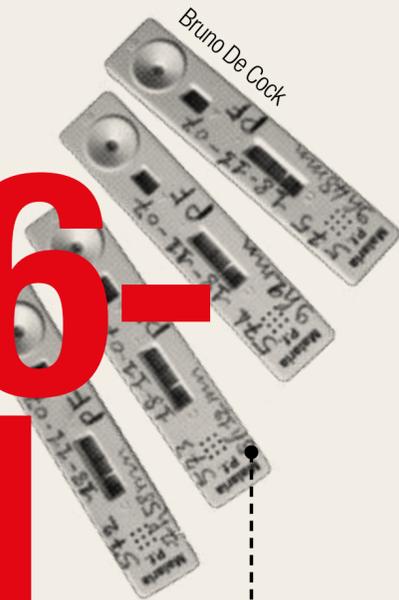
The first ever YouTube video is uploaded on 23 April 2005.



Devastation in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 2004.

MSF

2006-2011



Global economic crisis of 2008

Huge borrowing pushed the world's banking system towards the edge of collapse. Governments had to intervene, leading to a long period of financial instability worldwide.

CONFLICT IN GAZA

MSF supports hospitals in Gaza during the conflict. After a ceasefire is announced, MSF opens a surgical hospital and offers post-operative and psychological care.



Shifa Hospital Gaza, 2009.



Emergency surgery in Libya, 2011.

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

Surgical care in Jordan

MSF sets up a reconstructive surgical programme in Amman, Jordan to treat severely war-wounded patients referred by medical colleagues in Iraq.

Amman Hospital, Jordan, 2006.

A new treatment for malaria

The Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative collaborates on an inexpensive treatment for malaria.

FIND OUT MORE



The story of four patients at MSF's Reconstructive Hospital in Amman, Jordan

Cyclone Nargis hits Myanmar

MSF teams already working in the country help thousands of people displaced by the cyclone.

DFAT photo library is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar, 2008.



Earthquake in Haiti

After a massive earthquake hits Haiti, MSF launches one of its largest-ever interventions, expanding its projects in the country from three to 26. See page 42.



Port au Prince, Haiti, 2010.

Mustafa Hassona

Julie Remy

2012-2016

Gene editing is discovered in the US through the use of a bacterial immune system

Typhoon Haiyan devastates the Philippines

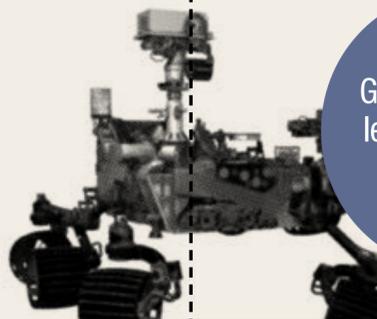
MSF responds to Typhoon Haiyan shortly after it makes landfall on 8 November.



Victory Island, Philippines, 2013.

Julie Remy

Curiosity, the roving robot on Mars, discovers water under the surface of the red planet in 2014.



Gay marriage is legalised in the UK in 2014.

2014

Kunduz Trauma Centre, Afghanistan, 2015.

Kunduz hospital bombing

In the early hours of Saturday, 3 October 2015, the MSF emergency hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, is repeatedly bombed by Coalition forces. Forty-two people are killed, including 14 MSF staff.



MSF

EU-Turkey Deal

In a historic move in June, MSF refuses EU funding in protest at the EU's new policy towards refugees and migrants.

2012

The MSF responds to the conflict in Syria

In July, MSF begins medical programmes inside Syria.

MSF initially sets up three field hospitals in the north of the country. One of the hospitals, located in a cave, would later be bombed after the MSF team left for more secure surroundings.

Khost hospital, Afghanistan, 2012.



Aurèle Neyret

MSF opens a specialised maternity hospital in Khost, Afghanistan

FIND OUT MORE



Aurèle Neyret

Illustrated book about MSF's Khost maternity hospital, Afghanistan

2015

EBOLA

Response begins to unprecedented Ebola epidemic

In March, MSF begins responding in Guinea to what it describes as an unprecedented Ebola epidemic due to the geographical spread of the virus.

MSF goes on to open 15 Ebola management and transit centres, caring for more than 5,000 patients. Fourteen MSF staff and hundreds of other health workers lose their lives to Ebola. See page 44.



Anna Surinyach

New Ebola treatment centre, Sierra Leone, 2014.

2016

Pneumonia vaccine price drop

Following pressure from MSF, two big vaccine producers agree to drop the price of the pneumonia vaccine for use in humanitarian emergencies.

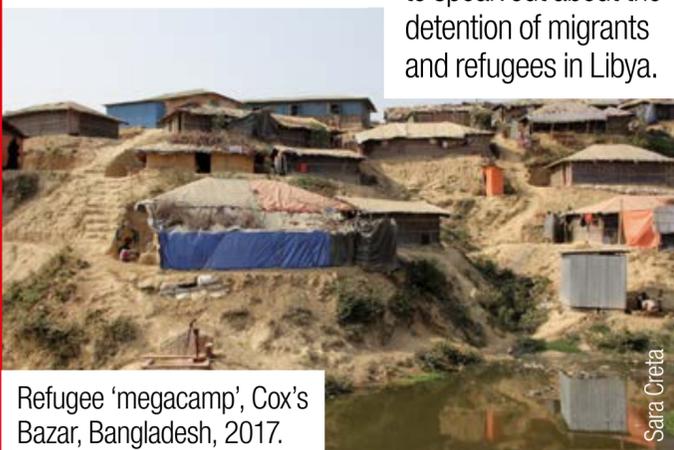


2017-2021

2017

Rohingya refugee crisis

Over 655,000 Rohingya refugees flee to neighbouring Bangladesh following targeted violence against them in Rakhine state, Myanmar. MSF expands its projects in the area to help these refugees. See page 46.



Refugee 'megacamp', Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 2017.

Sara Creta

European governments aid business of suffering

Joanna Liu, MSF International President from 2013 to 2019, sends an open letter to European government leaders to speak out about the detention of migrants and refugees in Libya.

2018

The Aquarius rescuing refugees, Mediterranean Sea, 2018.

Diplomatic stand-off at sea

In June, 630 vulnerable refugees and migrants are rescued by MSF and SOS Méditerranée on the Mediterranean Sea. Spain takes them in after they are denied entry to the nearest safe ports in Malta and Italy. See page 48.



Maud Veith/SOS Méditerranée

Newborns being treated for jaundice Ivory Coast, 2018.



Jean-Christophe Nougaret

Reconstructive surgery in Jordan, 2018.



Elisa Oddone

2019

Climate emergency

MSF commits to tackle healthcare emergencies caused by climate change.

Cyclone Idai hits Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar and Zimbabwe.



Pablo Garrigos

Mozambique, 2019.

2020

MSF RESPONDS TO THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC

MSF teams support health authorities in over 40 countries to protect the vulnerable and keep essential medical services running. See page 50.



Pablo Garrigos

Second large-scale Ebola outbreak

This began in DRC. It led to more than 3,000 cases and 2,000 deaths. MSF deployed over 500 staff.

Donning PPE, DRC, 2019.



COVID-19 global pandemic



Garvit Nangia

Donning PPE, India, 2020.

2021

MSF in 2021: a global organisation

Fifty years after it was founded, MSF has transformed into a global organisation with a workforce of over 45,000 people. It has six operational entities, which oversee 23 sections and 17 branch offices. Decisions about how MSF is run are overseen by 25 independent associations made up of staff who have worked for MSF.

50 YEARS OF MSF

MSF celebrates half a century of serving humanity and looks forward to the next 50 years!

KEY CHAPTERS IN MSF'S HISTORY

A NEW TYPE OF MEDICAL ORGANISATION:

THE BIRTH OF MSF

MSF was formed in 1971. That's over 50 years ago!

In all its work, MSF is:

- Impartial – MSF does not discriminate on race, religion, gender or politics.
- Neutral – MSF does not take sides in conflicts and focuses only on the wellbeing of patients and their communities.
- Independent – MSF is funded through private donations and does not take money from governments, which means it is independent of any outside influence.

How did MSF start?

In 1968, the French public began to see harrowing images on their black and white TV screens. For the first time ever, television showed scenes of children dying from hunger in remote corners of the world.

In southern Nigeria, Biafra had become cut off during the Nigerian civil war. This tiny territory was surrounded by the Nigerian army and a blockade imposed. The Biafran people were dying from famine.

The French Red Cross issued an appeal. Max Recamier and Bernard Kouchner, two French doctors, volunteered to help.

In 1971, French journalists Raymond Borel and Philippe Bernier issued an appeal to establish a band of doctors who would help people



Signing the MSF Charter in Paris, France, 1971.

D.R.

suffering because of major disasters and conflicts. The two French doctors jumped at the chance to get involved. They had been to Nigeria and Yemen, and now wanted to start an emergency medical response group.

Together in December 1971 they created 'Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF), known

internationally in English as 'Doctors Without Borders'.

Speaking out

MSF believes in the importance of telling the world about its work and the people it supports. This includes describing the challenges faced by medical teams and speaking about the suffering they see.

This is known as '*témoignage*', a French word for 'bearing witness'.

'We are not sure that words can always save lives, but we know that silence can certainly kill.'

Dr James Orbinski, former MSF President.

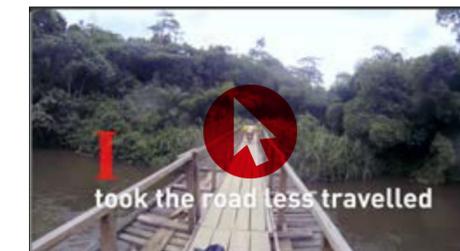
OVER TO YOU!

QUESTIONS

- 1** What help does MSF give?
- 2** What is the difference between impartial and neutral?
- 3** When and why was MSF created? Why the French name?
- 4** What is the French word for 'speaking out'? Why do you think speaking out is important?
- 5** In your own words, what does Dr Orbinski mean when he says, 'silence can certainly kill'?

LEARN MORE

📺 A set of three short videos detailing the work of MSF (7 mins).



FAMINE AND FORCED RELOCATIONS:

ETHIOPIA IN 1984

A televised famine

In 1984, terrible images, showing thousands of starving people in Ethiopia reached our television screens.

MSF responds

From the start of the crisis in Ethiopia, MSF had been

providing aid to starving people caught up in the famine.

However, the Ethiopian government, at the time, also used the international aid, which poured in, as bait to attract people affected by famine and then forcibly resettle them in appalling conditions.

Expelled from the country

MSF felt it had to make sure that humanitarian aid was not used against the victims because of foreign or internal politics. It refused to support the resettlement programme and the Ethiopian government



Nutritional feeding centre, Ethiopia, 1984.



Famine hits Ethiopia, 1984.

Generic MSF

forced MSF France to leave the country.

An opportunity for *témoignage*

Once expelled from Ethiopia, MSF was free to speak out about what it had seen:

"Perhaps this transfer is justifiable. But what's surprising about it is that, out of the dozens of reception camps set up for these people, humanitarian organisations only have access to two or three of them. So there are no witnesses and we're extremely concerned about what might be happening."

said MSF's president, Claude Malhuret, in late 1985.

The Ethiopian famine showed the dilemmas that can face all medical, humanitarian organisations.

Refugee camp, Ethiopia, 1985.



Generic MSF

OVER TO YOU!

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1 In 1985, how did the Ethiopian government use food aid?

2 Why was MSF France forced to leave Ethiopia in 1985?

3 Watch the video called 'Food Insecurity Explained'. What are the criteria for a famine?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1 What were the consequences of MSF speaking out about what the Ethiopian government was doing to its populations?

2 Do you think it was worth the risk?

LEARN MORE

📺 Food insecurity explained. What constitutes a famine (3 mins).



MORE RESOURCES

To learn more about different Geography topics, check out our GCSE and A Level resources:

[Geography](#)

GENOCIDE AND EXODUS:

RWANDA
IN 1994**Ethnic conflict**

MSF began running medical projects in Rwanda in 1982. There were two main ethnic groups in Rwanda, the Tutsis and the Hutus. In October 1990, civil war broke out between the Hutu-backed Rwandan Armed Forces (RAF) (representing the Hutu-led government of President Habyarimana) and the Tutsi-backed Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The RPF

entered Rwanda from the north, seeking to overthrow the President, but the Rwandan government, backed by France and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, known then as Zaire) just managed to avoid being defeated.

Ceasefire broken

Peace talks began but the ceasefire ended abruptly on 6 April 1994, when the

MSF hospital in an orphanage, Rwanda, 1994.



Xavier Lassalle

Kigali airport, Rwanda, 1994.



Xavier Lassalle

plane transporting President Habyarimana was shot down on its way to the capital, Kigali.

How the genocide began

Many Hutus blamed Tutsis for his death. In the days that followed, the RAF and the groups it backed began revenge killings. From April to July, between 500,000 and one million Tutsi Rwandans were murdered. These same groups also killed many Rwandan Hutus who had opposed the massacre. MSF decided to ask for UN intervention. For the only time in its history, MSF demanded the deployment of military troops to Rwanda because “you can’t stop a genocide with doctors”. (MSF France 1994).

Problems in the refugee camps

This violence forced hundreds of thousands of Rwandans to flee to the neighbouring countries of DRC, Tanzania and

Burundi, where refugee camps had been rapidly set up. By mid-July 1994, between 800,000 and 1,000,000 refugees had arrived in DRC.

MSF's response

Several MSF teams were working in these camps, providing medical care and shelter to those who had fled the conflict in Rwanda.

However, those behind the genocide took advantage of the chaos and moved from Rwanda into the same camps. MSF teams felt uneasy because of visible pressure, intimidation and violence in the camps from groups responsible for the genocide. At the same time, a cholera outbreak spread through the camps. MSF once again faced a difficult situation.

To find out in detail how MSF resolved the issues, explore the Extension Exercise on this page.

MSF aids refugees fleeing genocide, Rwanda, 1994.



Generic MSF

OVER TO YOU!

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- 1 What is a genocide?
- 2 What were the names of the two sides fighting in the Rwandan civil war?
- 3 What did MSF do for the first time in its history?
- 4 Which countries did the refugees go to?
- 5 Who else fled to the refugee camps?
- 6 What decision did MSF have to make?

LEARN MORE

▶ Watch the Conflict and Health Video (3 mins 38 secs).



- 1 How many were killed by the 1918 flu pandemic?
- 2 What do we need to stay healthy?
- 3 What happens to the health system during a war?
- 4 In Yemen, what has happened because of the war?

EXTENSION EXERCISE

Suitable for A Level students. Content warning: video contains images of injuries.



Look at the ‘What would you do?’ resources and consider the following:

If MSF remained in the camps, would this be aiding some of those responsible for the genocide? However, given the cholera outbreak, should MSF not stay to provide medical care? What should MSF do?

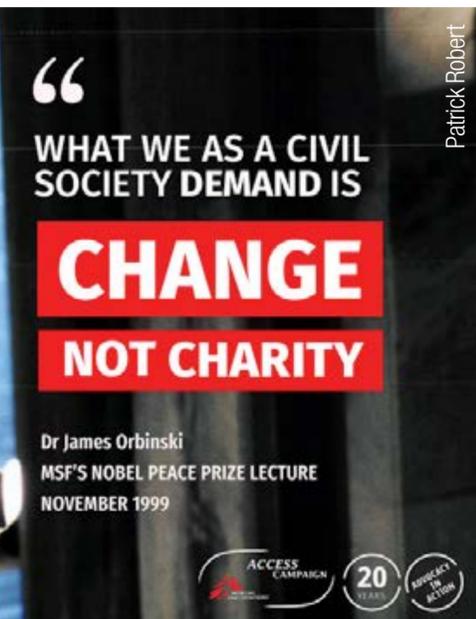
Decide what action you would have taken and find out what MSF did when faced with this difficult situation.

ESSENTIAL MEDICINES FOR ALL:

THE MSF ACCESS CAMPAIGN



James Orbinski, Norway, 1999.



Patrick Robert

How did the Access Campaign start?

In 1999, MSF was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for its work. MSF used the money that was part of the award to set up the MSF Access Campaign.

What is the aim of the MSF Access Campaign?

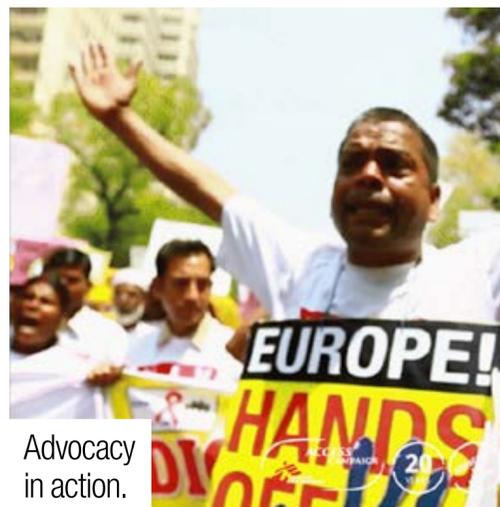
The MSF Access Campaign works to bring down the barriers that keep people from getting the treatment they need to live and be healthy. It advocates for effective drugs, tests and vaccines so that they are:

- available,
- affordable,
- suitable for all MSF patients,
- adapted to the places where MSF patients live.

Every day, MSF teams are frustrated by the lack of good medical tools available to them and the people they treat.

- For instance, a doctor working in a mobile clinic who cannot diagnose the cause of a fever because the tests require a fully equipped lab for accurate results.
- Or the man who must choose between selling his home and getting the lifesaving hepatitis C treatment he needs.
- And a logistician struggling to keep vaccines cool so they remain effective in blistering temperatures without electricity for refrigeration.

So, MSF reports on what needs to be done and the Access Campaign responds by looking for solutions. It aims to transform the way medical innovation, access and pricing work so that MSF teams and those we support do not have to face these challenges in the future.



Advocacy in action.

Access Campaign successes

Highlights from the Access Campaign's work from the last 20 years include: securing better prices for treatments for HIV, hepatitis C and pneumonia; founding the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi); and campaigning against patent abuse.



Advocacy

OVER TO YOU!

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- 1 Which Nobel Prize was awarded to MSF and when?
- 2 How did MSF use the prize money?



▶ Watch Video 1 about the Access Campaign (2 mins 20 secs).

3 What is the purpose of the Access Campaign?



▶ Watch Video 2 about the Access Campaign (2 mins 7 secs).

4 How does MSF increase access to medicines? Three things (30 secs onwards).

5 What is the slogan of the Access Campaign?

Nelson Mandela visits MSF projects in South Africa, 2002.



Eric Miller

LEARN MORE

View the [timeline](#) of the Access Campaign.

Three women – a patient, a doctor and a lawyer – share their stories about being affected by the struggle for access to medicines and their work to protect and increase access to medicines for all: [Access Campaign 20 years \(14 mins 30 secs\)](#).



CONDITIONS THE WORLD FORGOT:

MSF'S WORK WITH NEGLECTED DISEASES

MSF has been providing medical care to patients with neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) for more than 30 years, with a focus on the deadliest and most overlooked diseases in this group.

In that time, hundreds of thousands of patients have been treated, who otherwise may not have survived. Many had life-threatening parasitic infections, such as kala azar, Chagas disease or sleeping sickness. Some were infected with noma, a deadly bacterial disease so neglected that it is not yet officially recognised as an NTD. Others were the victims of snakebites, which cause more deaths and disabilities than any other NTD.

“NTDs almost exclusively affect people living in extreme poverty,” said Dr Christos Christou, MSF International President, since 2019. “As a result, there are no vaccines, diagnostic tools are limited, and treatments are far from optimal and often unavailable and unaffordable.”



MSF nurse treats child for sleeping sickness, DRC, 2014.

Marizida Cruppe



MSF clinical officer treats child for kala azar, Somalia, 2004.



OVER TO YOU!

FIND OUT ABOUT SNAKEBITE

Check out this comic book on snakebite.

▶ Watch this video about snakebite (4 mins).



FIND OUT ABOUT NOMA

▶ Watch this Noma explainer video (1 m 30 secs).



MORE ON DISEASES AND EPIDEMICS

To learn more about diseases and global epidemics, check out our [KS3](#), [GCSE](#) and [A-Level Biology](#) teaching resources.

MSF nurse treats patient for Chagas disease, Mexico, 2014.



Consuelo Pagaza



Espen Rasmussen

THE DEADLIEST TSUNAMI IN RECORDED HISTORY:

THE ASIAN TSUNAMI



Francesco Zizola - Noor

Medical supplies to remote villages, Indonesia, 2004.

What happened?

On 26 December 2004, a powerful earthquake, off the coast of Sumatra, created an enormous tsunami – or giant wave – that swept over parts of South Asia, killing more than 300,000 people and leaving behind widespread destruction and suffering. Hundreds of kilometres of coastline were destroyed. Houses, boats and buildings were washed away.

How did MSF respond?

MSF teams, working alongside local teams, began to provide people in need with medical care, food, water and other necessities.

MSF sent over 200 members of staff who concentrated their efforts on hard-hit communities in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, with smaller scale activities in Thailand, Malaysia and India.

Thailand

In Thailand, MSF responded by supporting Burmese migrant workers who found themselves in a particularly precarious position.

India

In southern India, MSF offered psychological support programmes.



Francesco Zizola - Noor

MSF deliver supplies in Sumatra, Indonesia, 2004.

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, where the damage was more extensive, MSF initially provided medical assistance and distributed relief goods.

Indonesia

By far the greatest focus of MSF activities was in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, where many key health personnel had died in the tsunami and the health infrastructure had been destroyed. MSF continued activities in Aceh, with vaccination programmes, mother and child health care projects and treatment for infectious diseases like tuberculosis.

Public Generosity

In an extraordinary show of support, the public donated nearly £100 million to MSF's worldwide tsunami appeal.

Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 2004.



Francesco Zizola - Noor

OVER TO YOU!

IN-DEPTH QUESTIONS

Use the internet to find out more and answer these questions:

- 1** What is a tsunami?
- 2** How are they formed?
- 3** What are the most urgent needs for people following a disaster like a tsunami?
- 4** Why do epidemics sometimes follow a natural disaster like a tsunami?
- 5** How do countries protect against tsunamis?

MORE RESOURCES

To learn more about different Geography topics, check out our GCSE and A Level resources:

[Geography](#)

CONFRONTING A DEADLY PANDEMIC: HIV/AIDS

What is HIV/AIDS?

The HIV virus was discovered in 1981. HIV develops into the disease AIDS, which has killed more than 32 million people.

HIV gradually weakens the body's immune system. A person living with HIV is considered to have developed AIDS when their immune system is so weak it can no longer fight off certain infections and diseases, such as pneumonia, meningitis, tuberculosis (TB) and some cancers.

Who is affected by HIV/AIDS?

According to the World Health Organization, at the end of 2019, approximately 38 million people were living with HIV/AIDS, most of them in southern Africa.

In 2020, nearly 700,000 people died from AIDS, while 1.7 million became newly infected with HIV. It is estimated that more than 12.6 million people are still not receiving treatment, whether through lack of access, testing or availability of medication.

Treating HIV/AIDS

There is no cure for HIV/AIDS, although treatments are much more successful than they used to be.

A combination of drugs, known as antiretrovirals (ARVs), help combat the virus and enable people to live longer, healthier lives without their immune systems rapidly deteriorating.

What does MSF do in the fight against HIV/AIDS?

MSF programmes offer HIV testing with counselling and treatment to prevent infections including mother-to-child transmission. MSF also provides ARV treatment for people in the late stages of the disease.

MSF educates and raises awareness to help people understand how to prevent the spread of the virus.

In 2019, MSF directly cared for 59,400 people on first-line HIV ARV treatment.



MSF advanced HIV project, DRC, 2017.

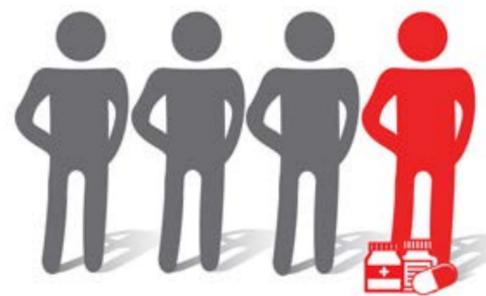
Kris Pannecoucke



HIV testing, Tanzania, 2020.

Tanzania

3 OUT OF 4 DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO ARV
(ANTIRETROVIRAL DRUGS)



9 OUT OF 10 CHILDREN DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO ARV TREATMENT



OVER TO YOU!

GENERAL QUESTIONS



▶ Watch this HIV/AIDS explainer video (30 secs).

1 What global proportion of AIDS deaths does the Central and Western Africa region account for?

2 What proportion of children are born with HIV?

3 Why do you think this part of the world is left behind in the fight against HIV / AIDS?



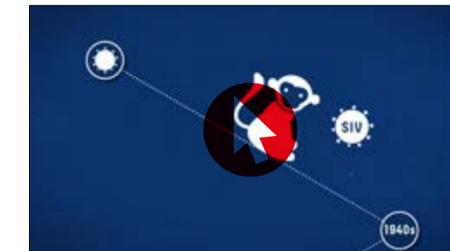
▶ Watch this video about Timmy who was HIV positive (4 mins).

1 What is stigma?

2 How does MSF build trust with its patients?

LEARN MORE

▶ Check out our series of videos on HIV/AIDS (15 mins 34 secs).



MORE RESOURCES

To learn more about diseases and global epidemics, check out our [KS3, GCSE and A-Level Biology teaching resources](#).

HIV medication, Tanzania, 2020.



Petro Jengela

MSF hospital lab, DRC, 2017.



Kris Pannecoucke

DISASTER IN THE CARIBBEAN:

THE HAITI EARTHQUAKE



Infrastructure destroyed following the earthquake, Haiti, 2010.

EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

On 12 January 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti.

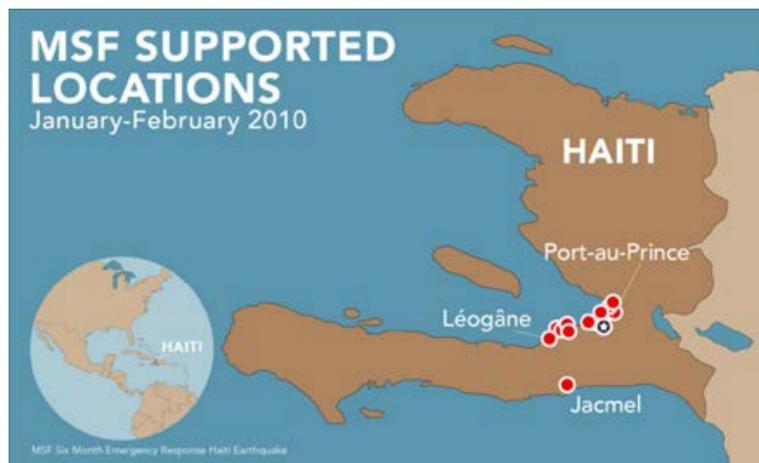
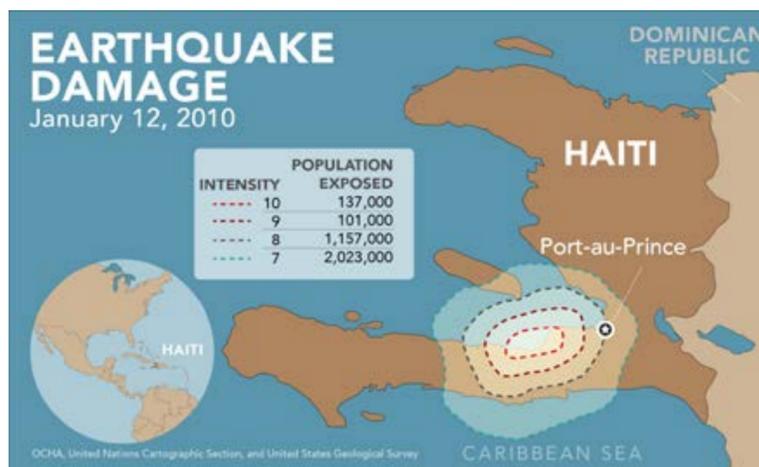
Scope of the disaster

The Haiti earthquake remains one of MSF's largest emergency responses to date. Many thousands were killed or made homeless and 60% of the country's health facilities were destroyed. 10% of Haiti's medical staff either lost their lives or left the country. Haiti's infrastructure was destroyed.

MSF staff lost

MSF, which had been providing healthcare in Haiti for 19 years prior to the earthquake, also suffered losses. Twelve staff members were killed, and two of their three medical facilities collapsed.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, thousands of Haitians, most of whom had been directly affected by the disaster, were joined by hundreds of international staff who flew in to help.



La Trinité Trauma Hospital, Haiti, 2010.

Julie Remy

MSF's immediate response

MSF's team in the capital, Port-au-Prince, swelled from 800 to 3,400 staff, working in 26 hospitals and dozens of mobile clinics throughout the city. Over the next 10 months, MSF treated over 350,000 patients and performed 16,000 surgeries. When an outbreak of cholera began, MSF treated 60 per cent of patients countrywide.

By the end of 2010, MSF donors across the world had donated more than £90 million to MSF's work in Haiti.

Long term action

MSF's experiences in Haiti showed how responding to a natural disaster often goes beyond the immediate crisis. The emergency phase, where MSF responded by providing medical care, psychological support, food, shelter and clean water, was relatively short.

In the long term, MSF needed to contain and limit the spread of infectious diseases, re-establish healthcare systems and support people who had lost their homes and were living in temporary shelters.



A makeshift hospital, Martissant, Haiti, 2010.

a In how many months did MSF treat 350,000 patients?

b What proportion of patients with cholera did MSF treat?

c Why do you think cholera can follow a disaster like this?

d How many people were made homeless?

3 Listen to the podcast, 'The letter that changed me' (23 mins) and make a list of the issues that a humanitarian worker like Dr Javid faced during this time.

OVER TO YOU!



Watch the video 'Haiti one year on' (5 mins 44 secs).

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1 Locate Haiti on a map. What do you find surprising?

2 Watch the animated video about the Haiti earthquake and then answer the following questions:



Animated video about the Haiti earthquake (1 min 5 secs).

TEACHING RESOURCES

To learn more, check out our KS3, GCSE and A Level resources:

- [Biology](#)
- [French](#)
- [Geography](#)
- [Spanish](#)

Julie Remy

FIGHTING A DEADLY DISEASE:

THE EBOLA VIRUS

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a highly infectious virus that can kill up to 90% of the people who catch it, causing terror among infected communities.

Ebola is so infectious that patients need to be treated in isolation by staff wearing protective clothing, such as a hazmat suit.

How is it transmitted?

Human-to-human transmission occurs through contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person, including blood and secretions. Ebola is not spread through air or water, or from newly infected people who are not yet showing any symptoms.

An increase in outbreaks

MSF has cared for thousands of people with Ebola since the mid-1990s. From Ebola's discovery in 1976 until 2014, most outbreaks were in isolated rural areas with fewer than 100 cases.

MSF intervened in the 2014-2016 West African epidemic, which marked a turning point in how the world responded to Ebola. The scale of the outbreak was unprecedented: 67 times the size of the largest previously recorded outbreak. It reached urban areas and killed over 11,300 people.

Sadly, there have been other outbreaks since then, in 2019 and 2020, particularly in the DRC.

Treating Ebola

No cure exists for Ebola, but two vaccines have now been approved; Ervebo in 2019 and the two-dose Zabdeno/Mavbea in 2020. Other treatments and vaccines are in development, which is bringing hope in the battle against this deadly disease.

Standard treatment is limited to keeping the patient hydrated, maintaining their oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating them for any infections.



John Moore/Getty Images

How MSF responds to Ebola

To mount an effective Ebola response MSF employs a series of actions, all of which are crucial to containing an outbreak:

- Newly infected people must be traced and isolated.
- Patients must be cared for and isolated.
- To reduce transmission, the burials of those that have lost their lives to Ebola must be made safe and dignified.
- Ambulances, patients' homes and health facilities must be thoroughly and regularly decontaminated.
- Health awareness must be promoted so that at-risk communities can identify new cases.
- Health facilities, which provide care for illnesses other than Ebola, must be fully supported.



John Wessels

Disinfected boots, DRC, 2018.



Fabio Basone

Dr Javid Abdelmoneim, Sierra Leone, 2014.



Fabio Basone

16 year old Ebola patient, Sierra Leone, 2015.



Ebola treatment centre, Liberia, 2014.

OVER TO YOU!

QUESTIONS

▶ Watch this short animated film (3 mins 44 secs) about MSF's response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, then answer the following questions:



- 1** In which three countries did Ebola first appear?
- 2** When did the World Health Organization say that Ebola was an 'international public health emergency'?
- 3** How many cases were there in 2014 and how many people sadly died in that year?
- 4** When did this epidemic finally end and how long did it last for?

WIDER READING

5 In your own words, what are the main differences between Ebola and Covid-19? You can use the internet to help you.

MORE RESOURCES

To learn more about diseases and epidemics, check out our [KS3, GCSE and A-Level Biology teaching resources](#).

LEARN MORE

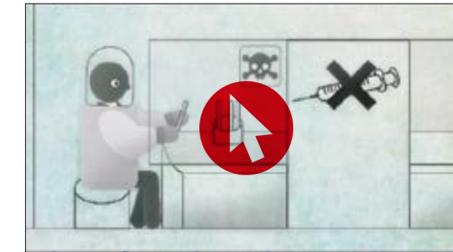
▶ Check out our series of 5 short films to learn more about Ebola.



▶ A history of Ebola (2 mins 54 secs).



▶ Mapping Ebola (3 mins 4 secs).



▶ How the body reacts to Ebola (3 mins 21 secs).



▶ Treating Ebola (3 mins 17 secs).



▶ Ebola in the Future (2 mins 40 secs).

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE:

RESPONDING TO GLOBAL MIGRATION

Unprecedented movement

At the end of 2019, there were nearly 80 million people forced from their homes around the world, more than at any time in modern history. These are people who have fled extreme dangers, including bombing campaigns, conflict, war, gang violence, poverty or other life-threatening circumstances.

People who have been forced from their homes often face further struggles on their journey to find safety, including lack of access to essentials like clean water, food, shelter, personal security and healthcare.

Increasingly, people on the move are trying to survive not just the harrowing challenges of migration itself, but also the harmful policies put in place by governments trying to keep out migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.



Athens day care centre, Greece, 2019.

Carole Isler

How does MSF help?

MSF works around the world to provide refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) with the medical care they need, from psychological care to lifesaving nutrition.

It cares for large numbers of displaced people in the world's leading host countries for refugees, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon, Uganda and Ethiopia.

MSF works in countries that have experienced massive population shifts due to conflict and natural disasters, including Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan, DRC and Honduras.

It also runs a search and rescue operation on the Mediterranean Sea for migrants attempting the crossing from north Africa



Marco, Greece, 2019.

Carole Isler

to Europe, and supports people along European migration routes.

Support in camps

MSF sets up hospitals in refugee camps, helps women give birth safely, vaccinates children to prevent epidemics and provides access to safe drinking water.

Examples of refugee camps where MSF works include Cox's Bazar, the largest refugee camp in the world, in Bangladesh. This is now 'home' for 800,000 Rohingya who were forced out of Myanmar by violence.

Other camps include Moria on the island of Lesbos in Greece. Conditions are worsening in Moria after a series of fires and the refusal of many governments to offer help to the people there.



MSF pediatric clinic, Moria, Greece, 2020.

Anna Pantelija/MSF

Most recently, MSF is responding in Sudan to where victims of the violence, (including sexual and gender-based violence), in neighbouring Tigray, Ethiopia, have fled.

Help in Europe

Over the last few years, MSF has supported refugees taking European migration routes to escape war and violence.

From 2015, MSF worked in the so-called 'Jungle' camp in Calais where more than 6000 lived in terrible conditions. Many had reached there following long and dangerous journeys to escape conflict, food insecurity and torture. The 'Jungle' has now been shut down but MSF still runs mobile clinics for migrants sleeping rough in the Calais area.



Chios camp, Greece, 2019.

Carole Isler

OVER TO YOU!

TRUE or FALSE

Look at these statistics from UNHCR here. Then decide which of these statements are true or false.

- 1 Germany took in the most refugees last year
- 2 Colombia was second for taking in refugees
- 3 Most refugees came from Syria
- 4 68% of all refugees come from just five countries
- 5 85% of all refugees are hosted in developed countries

TEACHING RESOURCES

To learn more, check out our KS3, GCSE and A Level resources.

[Biology](#)

[French](#)

[Geography](#)

[Spanish](#)

FIND OUT MORE

▶ Watch this animated film about the Rohingyas forced out of Myanmar (2 mins).



Give me Hope is an animated film created to highlight the plight of the Rohingya by Richard Swarbrick with music by Three Laws; [Twitter@rikkileaks](#), [Twitter@Wearepresence](#)

SAVING LIVES ON THE MEDITERRANEAN:

SEARCH AND RESCUE AT SEA

From Libya to Europe

The Central Mediterranean remains the world's deadliest sea border, with at least 1,300 people reported dead or missing in 2019 alone.

People who have been forced to leave their homes pay smugglers to help them cross the sea from Libya to Europe in what are often dangerous, unseaworthy boats.

Forced back to Libya

Not only are European governments turning a blind eye to these people when they run into trouble at sea, abandoning them for hours, days and sometimes weeks without assistance, they are also actively conspiring to push vulnerable people back to Libya.

According to the United Nations, Libya is not safe. Yet thousands of people have been intercepted and forcibly returned, in a cycle of torture, abuse and arbitrary detention.



The Vos Prudence, Mediterranean Sea, 2017.

Andrew McConnell



Ibrahim, Mediterranean Sea, 2017.

Andrew McConnell

This is part of a bilateral agreement with Libya, funded by European member states.

Everyone has the right to flee for their safety, to seek asylum, and to have their asylum claim assessed. At no point should this involve anyone being forced to risk their lives.

MSF's response

Since 2015, MSF has been involved in search and rescue in the Mediterranean Sea and has been active in advocating for the rights of refugees. In the five years since MSF began this work, over 80,000 people have been rescued or assisted at sea in operations carried out by MSF.

“No human being should be left to drown, to sink beneath the waves. No human being should be forced to endure torture and suffering. Yet this is the consequence of criminal dereliction of duty by European governments.”

Oliver Behn, MSF Director of Operations

OVER TO YOU!

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Look at this [interactive map of MSF rescues in the Mediterranean Sea](#):

1 To date, how many people have been assisted by MSF?

2 How many rescue operations have there been?

3 How many transfer operations?

IN DEPTH QUESTIONS

1 Listen to the podcast: [How We Rescued 560 People on the Mediterranean \(26 mins\)](#).

1 Why would refugees risk the trip across the Mediterranean?

2 What are the steps involved in a rescue?

3 What will happen to the refugees once they have been rescued?

FIND OUT MORE

Click here for [Downloadable Resource – Refugees the facts](#)

1 Watch this video: 'A message to Europe' (3 mins).



2 Watch his short film: 'Human Cargo – MSF Search and Rescue' (28 mins) Content warning: scenes of CPR and descriptions of extreme suffering.



A baby born upon the Aquarius, Italy, 2016.

Alva Simpson White



Omayma, Mediterranean Sea, 2017.

Andrew McConnell

A GLOBAL HEALTH EMERGENCY:

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

What is COVID-19?

A new coronavirus was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The virus is very contagious, and everyone is presumed to be susceptible.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses most of which are harmless to humans. Four types are known to cause colds. Two other types can cause severe lung infections: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). COVID-19, which stands for 'coronavirus disease 2019', is known by specialists as SARS-CoV-2 because of its similarities to the virus that causes SARS.

COVID-19 seems to target cells in the lungs and possibly other cells in the respiratory system. Cells infected by the virus will produce more virus particles, which can then spread to other people, for instance by coughing.

How widespread is it?

As of 2021, COVID-19 remains a worldwide pandemic with infections detected in over 212 countries so far. This is the worst global outbreak of a disease since the influenza pandemic, which began in 1918.

The rapid spread of the disease has overwhelmed healthcare systems, disrupted economies and completely altered normal

life in many parts of the world. Since it was first reported by the World Health Organization, COVID-19 has killed more than 3.4 million people and infected over 163 million, with many more cases going unreported.

How is MSF responding?

MSF teams are working in projects in more than 70 countries to fight the spread of COVID-19. They are also helping to sustain other lifesaving medical care for communities who are further threatened by the pandemic. Teams are caring for patients, offering health education and mental health support,

providing training for vital infection prevention and control measures in health facilities, and supporting response efforts by local authorities.

Everywhere it works, MSF sees how this pandemic hurts already vulnerable and marginalised communities.



Patna Bihar, India, 2020.

Garviti Nangia



PPE checks, India, 2020.

Aashna Dhar



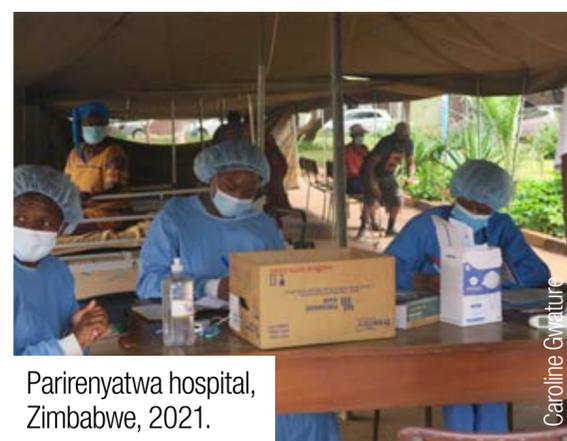
Cadogno hospital, Italy, 2020.

Lisa Veran



Humanitarian hub in Brussels, Belgium, 2020.

Jeffrey Monnier



Parirenyatwa hospital, Zimbabwe, 2021.

Caroline Gwiture



MSF field hospital in South Africa, 2020.

MSF/Rowan Rybus (@Wakhtlu)

OVER TO YOU!

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LOCKDOWN

- 1** Without thinking or feeling judged write down three words to describe lockdown for you
- 2** What did you miss most in lockdown?
- 3** What has been hard during the pandemic?
- 4** What has surprised you during the pandemic?
- 5** How do you think life will be different for you after COVID-19?

The car of the MSF mobile clinic, ready to leave for a home consultation.



Carole Isler

FIND OUT MORE

[An illustrated record of MSF's COVID-19 intervention in Switzerland.](#)

[A video of mental health tips during COVID-19 \(1 min\).](#)

TEACHING RESOURCES

To learn more, check out our KS3, GCSE and A Level resources.

[Biology](#)

[French](#)

[Spanish](#)



Gazer Gah hospital, Afghanistan, 2020.

Laura McAndrew



DRC

Anne Boher



Iraq

Gabrielle Klein



South Sudan

Matthias Steinbach



Sierra Leone

MSF



DRC

Rob Verrecchia

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William Martin