



## **INTRO**

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Dear colleagues,

Joining Médecins Sans Frontières – making the transition from health professional to committed humanitarian worker – is no small undertaking. You will be required to put your medical experience to use in extremely complex humanitarian situations and to apply your clinical skills to provide assistance to populations in distress around the world.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is striving, more than ever before, to provide patients with quality medical services in severe and chronic crises, while also offering a growing number of medical specialities.

All of our efforts share the single aim of directly helping to reduce mortality, morbidity and human suffering among the communities in which we work. Doctors have developed all of our projects. In recent years, we have significantly increased our activities in the fields of surgery, orthopaedics and emergency referrals.

The patient is at the centre of what we do, whether it is a person living with HIV/AIDS, a young woman undergoing an emergency caesarean or someone critically injured in a conflict-affected area. The care provided by our doctors is always tailored to the individual needs of the patient and to their environment. This is often achieved via innovative operational approaches. We reject the principle of double standards in

medicine and we always do our utmost to create the best possible clinical environment for every patient.

The duties of an MSF doctor encompass so much more than the work of an ordinary clinical practitioner. As an active member of a humanitarian team, an MSF doctor assesses needs and provides solutions. Our doctors must raise public awareness, in the field or upon return, by sharing their experience as a first-hand witness. The MSF Charter, which is the foundation of our work, is unique. It combines fundamental humanitarian principles, such as impartiality and independence, with the principles of universal medical ethics: it is the root of the values that underpin all of our work.

The regions your work with MSF will take you, are sometimes very remote, but also magical in an emotional sense. They are not holiday destinations and living conditions can be very basic. Nevertheless, the plains of the Sudan, the vibrant poor districts of Karachi and Nairobi, the mountains in eastern Congo or any other place we work will remain forever etched in your mind. We have no other option than to live in close contact with local communities, another one of our core values.

In 2013, 346 doctors went out into the field with the Operational Centre Brus-

sels, including 46 surgeons, 23 orthopaedic surgeons, 65 anaesthetists, 40 obstetricians-gynaecologists, 14 paediatricians, 9 emergency doctors and 149 general practitioners.

Dr. Bart Janssens

Director of Operations
MSF - Operational Centre Brussels

## **ABOUT US**



The Timurgara medical team examines a patient's CT scan in the emergency unit (Pakistan). | © P.K. Lee/MSF (2012)

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an international, medical humanitarian organisation that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters and to those excluded from healthcare.

MSF is an independent, autonomous non-governmental organisation. More than 90 per cent of our overall funding comes from the generosity of private donors. Our actions are guided by medical ethics and the principles of neutrality and impartiality. We conduct our own evaluations to determine people's needs without any discrimination. MSF does not take sides in armed conflicts

and demands the right to have free access to patients and the space it needs to effectively respond to medical emergencies.

MSF medical teams often witness violence and neglect in the course of their work, largely in regions that receive scant international attention. At times, MSF may speak out in an effort to bring a forgotten crisis to public attention, to alert the public to abuses occurring beyond the headlines, to criticise the inadequacies of the aid system, or to challenge the diversion of humanitarian aid for political interests.

#### The Médecins Sans Frontières Charter

The Médecins Sans Frontières organisation was founded in 1971 by a group of doctors and journalists. In 40 years, MSF has acquired an international reputation for delivering medical assistance to vulnerable people.

In 1999, the organisation had the honour of being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Today, MSF is an international movement with more than 22,000 people working in over 60 countries.

Adhering to a common Charter, MSF's teams are made up of medical, logistics and administrative staff including many different nationalities, expatriates and local employees. They provide assistance in accordance with the principles of humanitarian action and medical ethics.

## All of its members agree to honour the following principles:

Médecins Sans Frontières provides assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict. They do so irrespective of race, religion, creed or political convictions.

Médecins Sans Frontières observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and claims full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions.

Members undertake to respect their professional code of ethics and maintain complete independence from all political, economic or religious powers.

As volunteers, members understand the risks and dangers of the missions they carry out and make no claim for themselves or their assigns for any form of compensation other than that which the association might be able to afford them.

The surgical team operates to remove a bullet from the abdomen of a patient in the operating room of an MSF inflatable hospital (Syria). | © Nicole Tung (2013)

## WHO WE NEED



MSF recruits medical and paramedical staff for its projects. Due to the ever-increasing number of man-made and natural disasters in the world, MSF has made the strategic decision to scale up its surgical work in the field, particularly in conflict-prone regions. This is the reason why the need for more surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, anaesthetists and operating room nurses has increased in recent years. In parallel, MSF is launching a growing number of programmes focused on maternal and child health and reproductive health. As such, we are constantly looking for obstetricians-gynaecologists, operating room nurses and midwives to assist women who do not have access to health care.

#### **OUR GENERAL SELECTION CRITERIA:**

- Motivation to undertake a humanitarian mission and adhere to the values of the MSF Charter
- Valid qualification for your profession and a valid licence to practice
- A good knowledge of French and/or English (Arabic is a bonus)
- Prepared to apply the medical protocols and policies developed by MSF
- Prepared to go to any region in which we work
- Prepared to leave without your family
- Availability: 6 weeks to 6 months

#### **YOUR QUALITIES:**

- Flexible and stress resistant
- Team spirit
- Organisational and managerial skills

#### IN PARTICULAR:

The majority of positions require team management skills; i.e. staff management, training and supervision.

## SURGEONS

Surgeons supervise and coordinate the surgical unit as a whole. They are responsible for ensuring the quality of the surgical unit, operating room, dressings room and outpatient and inpatient units. The surgeon manages surgical procedures in close cooperation with the team; i.e. surgeons, anaesthetists and operating room nurses, and organises training for the operating room staff.

#### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Providing surgery and carrying out various types of procedures (including abdominal surgery, emergency obstetric surgery, basic orthopaedic surgery and surgery for trauma and violent injuries such as bullet and knife wounds);
- Managing and organising the surgical department (including the outpatient clinic, emergency room, operating room and surgical unit);
- Recruiting, training and assessing local staff in surgery-related fields;
- Implementing quality protocols in compliance with MSF guidelines and standards;
- Collecting and analysing medical data and reporting on surgical activities.

#### SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Ability to practice general surgery (paediatric surgery, caesarean sections, etc.);
- Experience in emergency care, war surgery and orthopaedics desirable;
- · Ability to work with limited resources.



Oscar Alvarado, orthopaedic surgeon, at work in Kunduz, Afghanistan. © Oscar Alvarado (2013)

#### **ALBERT DENOEL**



**Profession:** Surgeon **Missions with MSF:** Pakistan, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Haiti

This really is Afghanistan!
There are beautiful snowcapped mountains on all
sides. But more importantly

there are the people and particularly their appearance; the men with their pakols and their patus (the traditional cap and shawl) and the women in their blue burqas. It is very touching for me to see the cultural barriers coming down and to see their happiness when we treat or operate on their child. Naturally, communication is difficult, but there are always universal ways of communicating sadness and happiness.

However, treating people by carrying out minor or major surgery is the driving force for my being here. I have carried out caesarean sections. I have treated broken fingers. I have operated on a thirteen-year-old girl who had leukaemia. There is no treatment for such diseases in Afghanistan. Her father drove her to Pakistan where they treated her with Enoxan and that was it.

But I cope well; I am happy, even if being away from my family is difficult some days. Because it is also a retreat that forces me to reflect on what we are, on what we do in relation to what we think we are and what we think we can do. Meeting all these young people from different backgrounds and with different ambitions never ceases to amaze me, to inspire me and also, sometimes, to unnerve me.

#### MARTIAL LEDECQ



Profession: Surgeon Missions with MSF: Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Niger, Pakistan, Central African Republic.

Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Syria, Chad, Turkey

Our campaign hospital in the north of Syria was in a cave that had been used to store fruit, vegetables and fuel.

Managing to create the right conditions needed to operate an effective medical and surgical unit was an enormous challenge. We had to provide a constant water and electricity supply and we had to ensure sterile and hygienic conditions. We set up an inflatable, waterproof tent to accommodate the operating room. Our goal was to set up a hospital in a very rural location at the foot of a hill. It was an enormous logistical challenge, but we did it!

## ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

The role of an orthopaedic surgeon consists in supervising and coordinating the orthopaedic surgery unit and orthopaedic activities in liaison with the emergency room, outpatient unit, operating room, dressing room and inpatient unit. The orthopaedic surgeon manages orthopaedic procedures in close cooperation with the team; i.e. surgeons, anaesthetists and operating room nurses, and organises training for the operating room staff.

#### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Managing and organising the orthopaedics department: managing the necessary orthopaedic equipment (external fixators, internal fixators, etc.) and, with the help of the operating room nurse, ensuring that this equipment is always available;
- Recruiting, training and assessing local staff in fields related to orthopaedic surgery;
- Implementing quality protocols in compliance with MSF guidelines and standards;
- Collecting and analysing medical data and reporting on surgical activities.

#### **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

 Experience in trauma and war surgery highly desirable.



#### MARC GOOSSENS



Profession: Orthopaedic Surgeon Missions with MSF: Afghanistan, Haïti

Afghanistan is still a warafflicted country. Setting up the trauma centre in Kunduz was an MSF initiative: there

is a crying need for treatment for bomb and gunshot victims, and road accident casualties. As an orthopaedic surgeon, it is very difficult to prepare in advance for the complicated injuries that come with a brutal war.

On the one hand, the injuries are incredibly cruel, particularly in children, and on the other, they are also a challenge for the doctor: what treatment and surgery are required? Working for MSF forces you to surpass yourself, because every day there are new problems that need to be dealt with.

Seeing problems from a totally different angle (thinking outside of the box) and acting by cleverly improvising are assets that are often needed to treat complicated medical cases. Fortunately, as an expatriate, I can rely on the knowledge and assistance of the local doctors and on the motivated cooperation of the operating room nurses. It goes without saying that the work is hard, both mentally and physically, but the reward is worth it: we receive the gratitude of the patients and their family, and the respect of all the hospital staff.

Christos Christou, surgeon, operates on a bullet wound to the left hand (South Sudan).

| © Isabel Corthier (2013) ←

I feel it is a great privilege to be accepted and admitted here without fuss, in their home environment and place of work, as a visitor, a stranger and a non-Muslim, despite the relatively short duration of my two-month mission.

Rediscovering basic medicine was a revelation; the essential had become important again, without however losing the value of qualitative logistical assistance (osteosynthetic devices, dressings and medicines).

Afghanistan purely and simply needs capable doctors. Coming to work here really is not an act of heroism; it is merely a question of taking the following step: 'Yes, I'm going to help.' What's more, you have the enormous satisfaction of a sense of achievement.

## **ANAESTHETISTS**

The role of an MSF anaesthetist consists in supervising and coordinating the anaesthetic services in the emergency room, outpatient unit, operating room, dressings room and inpatient unit. They are responsible for delivering pre-, intra- and post-operative anaesthesia to ensure that the patient receives the necessary support during their surgery. They coordinate the anaesthetic services in their entirety and organise training for national staff.

#### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Managing and organising the anaesthetics department (including the emergency room, operating room, outpatient clinic and intensive care unit);
- Delivering anaesthesia and using various techniques: intubation, mask anaesthesia, spinal anaesthesia and local anaesthesia;
- Recruiting, training and assessing local staff in fields relating to anaesthesia;
- Implementing quality protocols in compliance with MSF guidelines and standards;
- Collecting and analysing medical data and producing a medical report.

Jacques Meumeu, a nurse anaesthetist, delivers a spinal anaesthesia before a hernia operation in the OT room in Niangara (Democratic Republic of Congo).

#### SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Experience in paediatric, obstetric & trauma anaesthesia:
- Experience in dissociated anaesthesia (i.e. ketamine);
- Extensive experience in spinal anaesthesia.



#### **CHRISTINE DU MAINE**



machete wounds).

Profession: Anaesthetist Missions with MSF: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo

My last mission was in Masisi

in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the operating room in Masisi, as for most MSF projects, we mainly dealt with pregnant women (on whom we had to carry out caesarean sections, procedures during which additional complications sometimes arose such as a ruptured uterus or eclampsia) and trauma victims (falls, road traffic accidents, burns, several caused by lightning, and gunshot or

We also carried out various non-emergency procedures, particularly after the arrival of the MSF surgeon.

We organised weekly training sessions on topics that, on the basis of my observations, needed to be covered in further detail, and on topics that the anaesthetist nurses had proposed. I listened to them carefully, assisted them and advised them during more difficult cases and I lent a helping hand when the workload was too great. The rest of my time was dedicated to finding the best way to ensure the provision of material needed for the operating room, defining patient care pathways, implementing general hygiene practices in the operating room in accordance with MSF protocols and supervising the sterilisation and laundry activities. These tasks required close cooperation with the pharmacist, the head nurse and the logistics officer.

In my country of origin, I had never had to carry out such tasks, and yet they are so

essential to delivering quality care to our surgery patients. Fortunately, to achieve this, MSF gave me a lot of information and protocols to follow. I also gave training in CPR to all the nursing staff at the hospital, and I made suggestions as to the content and use of the resuscitation kits in each department.

Thanks to MSF, I had the opportunity not only to learn a lot about anaesthesia and the operation of the various hospital services, but also to discover some beautiful places that I would never otherwise have visited, to meet charming people and to gain a better understanding of the conflicts taking place around the world and of their impact on people's lives.

## GYNAECOLOGISTS

In coordination with the midwifery team, the obstetrician-gynaecologist supervises and organises the obstetrics and gynaecology department. The obstetrician-gynaecologist takes care of the patients requiring second-line obstetric follow-up (with first-line care being provided by the midwife). The obstetrician-gynaecologist is also responsible for training paramedical staff.

#### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Carrying out simple and complicated deliveries, planned and emergency obstetric and gynaecological procedures and pre- and post-operative management;
- Managing and organising the obstetrics and gynaecology department, including the emergency room, outpatient clinic, operating room, delivery room and maternity unit;
- Working in close cooperation with the midwifery team;
- Recruiting, training and assessing national staff in fields relating to obstetrics and gynaecology;
- Implementing quality protocols in compliance with MSF guidelines and standards;
- Collecting and analysing medical data and producing a medical report.

#### **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

• Current or recent professional experience.

Doctor Lyse Rama learns to carry out a caesarean under the supervision of Severine Caluwaerts, gynaecologist (Burundi). | © Séverine Caluwaerts (2012) →

#### **SÉVERINE CALUWAERTS**



Profession: Gynaecologist Missions with MSF: Sierra Leone, Niger, Burundi, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Democratic Republic of Congo, gynaecology specialist at MSF HQ in Brussels.

With MSF, I had the opportunity to work as a doctor, a profession I had chosen 15 years earlier. As a gynaecologist, we care for women and babies, often society's most vulnerable. We try to ensure that they are born under the best possible conditions.

I feel, and this feeling has only grown stronger in recent years, that women, wherever they are, deserve a risk-free delivery, whether they are in the Congo or Afghanistan or Belgium. So, I am proud to be able to contribute.

My work at MSF brings me great satisfaction as I deal with the essence of life: helping to bring babies into the world! In Afghanistan, for example, I trained a young Afghan colleague in new techniques.

Such work offers hope for a better future, not only for her, but also for Afghanistan. MSF sends us to places where we would never go under other circumstances. Masisi in eastern Congo or Khost in Afghanistan are cities that mean a lot more to me than mere names on a map. I lived, learnt and brought babies into the world there. I laughed and talked there; some people gave my first name to their children. Those are memories that stay with you for the rest of your life.



# OPERATING ROOM NURSES

The MSF operating room nurse is responsible for providing nursing care in the surgical department, which includes sterilisation, cleaning procedures, the pharmacy system and assistance during surgical procedures (instruments). The operating room nurse works in close cooperation with the anaesthetists, surgeons and obstetricians-gynaecologists.

#### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Training and supervising local operating room nurses depending on their skills, and overall management of the operating room with a view to handing over full responsibility in the long term;
- · Monitoring patients and their files;
- Supervising the sterilisation of equipment and laundry;
- Supervising the pre- and post-operative nursing care delivered to patients.

#### SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree in nursing, with a specialisation in operating room nursing;
- Degree in tropical medicine or a one-year relevant experience in a tropical setting;
- Experience in general surgery, trauma, orthopaedics and/or obstetrics;
- Availability: 6 to 12 months.

Treatment of severe burns at Drouillard hospital, Cité Soleil (Haiti). | © André Quillien/MSF (2013). →

#### **STIJN DECAT**



Profession:
Operating room nurse
Missions with MSF:
Burundi, Libya,
Democratic Republic of
Congo

My various experiences with MSF have all been amazing. As an experienced scrub nurse, on my first mission, I was responsible for several services whose operation I knew nothing about at the time. In addition to my work in the pharmacy, I also managed a service for new mothers, the operating room, the sterilisation department and the laundry service. My eleven-month mission in Burundi was a rich learning experience; it was fulfilling and I learnt a great deal from the local people, who were admirable in more ways than one, and from the international team, which was fantastic.

In May 2011, I departed for Misratah, a city in Libya that was in the grip of armed conflict at the time. The 30-hour boat journey from Malta to the Mediterranean city of Misratah was the start of an unforgettable five-week mission. In the operating room, at the operating table, with a team of motivated doctors and nurses, we ensured that Libyan women could bring their children into the world in complete safety.

On my last mission, I went to Masisi, in North Kivu, in eastern Congo, where in I worked in a fully operational hospital in the middle of the bush. With the assistance of more than 33 Congolese colleagues, we provided free health care. In this hospital, we did not only treat patients with viral and bacterial diseases, but also victims of sexual and physical violence, acts that are unfortunately a common occurrence in this war-struck region.

I will never forget the fortitude, courage and perseverance of these people who I had the opportunity to meet.



## **MIDWIVES**

The MSF midwife is responsible for implementing and monitoring the various activities of the project that concern women's health: pregnancy and delivery care, care for victims of sexual violence, family planning, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, etc.

#### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Supervising the midwifery team;
- Ensuring the obstetric follow-up of patients;
- Organising the reproductive health department: managing human resources and the pharmacy, compiling statistical data, etc.;
- Recruiting, training and assessing national staff in fields related to reproductive health.

#### **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

- Supervising the midwifery team;
- Ensuring the obstetric follow-up of patients;
- Organising the reproductive health department: managing human resources and the pharmacy, compiling statistical data, etc.;
- Recruiting, training and assessing national staff in fields related to reproductive health.

Safia, midwife, takes the blood pressure of a

Syrian patient, a refugee in Lebanon.

| © Marjie Middleton (2013). →

#### **ELS GEERTS**



Profession: Midwife Missions with MSF: Afghanistan, Syria, Sierra Leone

At the moment, I am on my third mission with MSF. I have helped set up a maternity unit in Afghanistan, supported the emergency team in Syria and assisted gynaecologists in Sierra Leone. Every mission is a new challenge. Sometimes, there is more of a focus on technical skills, sometimes there is greater focus on the team. During my missions, I learned to assist breach births, manage the pharmacy, ensure the development of human resources and manage stress. Thanks to my experience with MSF, I discovered new cultures and gained a greater understanding of data analysis, all while cooperating continuously

with other departments. And the list is far from being exhaustive.

The most important thing for me is that I really found out more about myself; I learned things that have allowed me to reach my full potential in more ways than one.

Of course, it is not easy leaving your family and friends for a country at war. You meet women in poor health, when you know that proper medical care would have spared them such a situation. Adapting to a new culture may seem simple, but some situations inevitably make the job more difficult, such as having to obtain written permission to save the life of a mother and/or child; it is not always as easy as it may seem. However, I love this job, for the recognition you receive from local colleagues, patients and the people. I am proud to be a midwife!



## LIFE IN THE FIELD

Conditions vary from one project to the next. Living and working conditions may be hard and you will probably have to adjust to unfamiliar food, living arrangements, entertainment and companions, and a different pace of life. Privacy and leisure time may be scarce. In some cases, you may be exposed to extreme weather conditions or experience isolation due to the remote location of the project.

Instability and political uncertainty in the country where you are posted can become a part of daily life in the field. For security reasons, curfews and restricted travel are sometimes imposed on the teams.

You will have to adapt to cultural differences (with the local culture and the habits of the international team). These exist, and while they may be a source of enrichment, they can also generate misunderstandings.

Punctuality at work, relationships with superiors and gender relations may differ from one country to the next.

Tolerance toward people who think and act differently to you is crucial. Tolerance and mutual respect are essential values within Médecins Sans Frontières.

1 | Sabine Dorm, nurse, with a young patient in the emergency department of a hospital in Syria.

© Robin Meldrum/MSF (2013) >

2 | The MSF team on the way to Kunduz hospital (Afghanistan) |  $\bigcirc$  Ben King/MSF (2013)  $\rightarrow$ 

3 | The members of the MSF team at the residence at Aweil (South Sudan). | © Marion Martane (2011) →



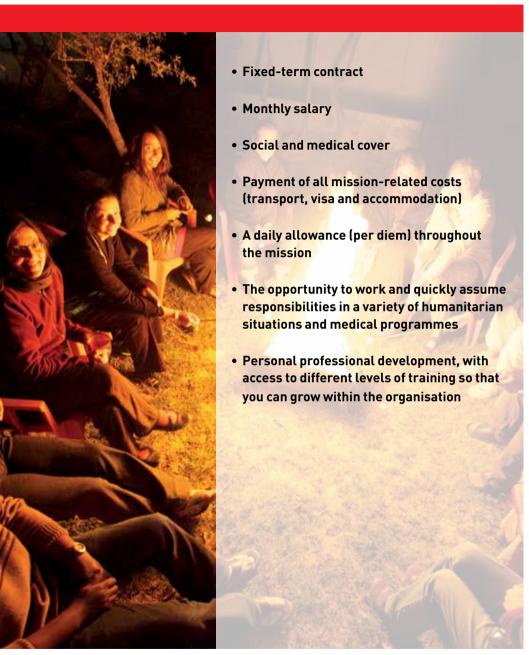
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## WHAT WE OFFER



The MSF expatriates roast marshmallows on a campfire in the MSF compound garden in Lashkar Gah (Afghanistan). © Ben King/MSF (2013)

## HOW TO APPLY

- 1. Consult our website or attend one of our information sessions in Brussels or online.
- If you meet all the criteria, apply online: upload your covering letter, CV and qualifications at www.msf.be.
- 3. We screen all applications and contact appropriate candidates by telephone. On the basis of a telephone interview, you will be, or not, invited to proceed to the next stage.
- According to your profile, you will be invited to a selection day in Brussels or to a second telephone interview with a specialist in your field.
- 5. After you are recruited, you will be added to the pool of expatriates that MSF can call on, and after the necessary training and briefings you will be sent on a field mission.
- Do you have any questions? Please contact our recruitment staff by email at recruitment@brussels.msf.org.

## **FAQs**

- Can I decide which country I work in?
   MSF assigns you to a position according to
   the needs in the field, your specialisation,
   and your availability. Final acceptance
   or refusal of the mission is down to the
   humanitarian worker, but we expect
   them to be open to a large number of
   destinations and activities.
- Is there an age limit for working with MSF in the field?

No, but you must be in good health and able to work. Candidates must be vaccinated against diseases found in the country they are being sent to and must take other necessary prevention measures (for example against malaria).

 How does MSF ensure security in the field?

Work with MSF is governed by a framework. MSF applies stringent risk management procedures and security guidelines are constantly updated for every project. Humanitarian workers are informed about the safety conditions in their assigned country prior to their departure and are trained in the specific safety protocols on arrival at the project location. Compliance with our staff and field staff code of conduct and security regulations is non-negotiable.







### Médecins Sans Frontières

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