

Department of International Development public lecture

Stop Bombing Hospitals: Medecins Sans Frontieres and the protection of medical space

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LSE events

Hashtag for Twitter users: **#LSEconflict**





PROTECTION OF THE MEDICAL MISSION

VICKIE HAWKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MSF UK – LSE, MAY 2016

ATTACKS ON HOSPITAL

2015-2016 EVENTS





03 OCTOBER KUNDUZ TRAUMA
CENTER



#IND

TION



AMERICA

Pentagon Report Says Airstrike On Afghan Hospital Wasn't A War Crime

April 29, 2016 · 3:47 PM ET

SANS FRONTIERES



MEANWHILE, IN OCT 2015
12 HOSPITALS BOMBED IN
SYRIA
(6 SUPPORTED BY MSF)



OCT 26, MSF-SUPPORTED
HAYDAN HOSPITAL, NORTHERN
YEMEN



DEC 2, MSF **TAIZ CLINIC**;
JAN 10, MSF-SUPPORTED **SHIARA**
HOSPITAL, RAZEH



FEB 15, MSF SUPPORTED
MA'ARAT AL-NUMAN,
IDLIB, SYRIA

IN 2015, 106 ATTACKS ON 75 MSF & MSF-SUPPORTED HOSPITALS

- 63 IN SYRIA
- 5 IN YEMEN
- 5 IN UKRAINE
- 1 IN AFGHANISTAN
- 1 IN SUDAN

WHAT DO THESE NUMBERS MEAN?

Perpetrators	Intention/trigger	Type of attack
International forces	Counter-terrorism policies	Violations against wounded and sick
State security forces	Military strategy	Violations against personnel
Armed non-state actors	Political strategy	Violations against health care facilities
Authorities	Suspicion / perception	Violations against medical vehicles
Community leaders	Theft / looting	
Organised criminals	Real or perceived grievance	
Patients and families	Economic motives	
Visitors and other civilians	Drunkenness, drug abuse	

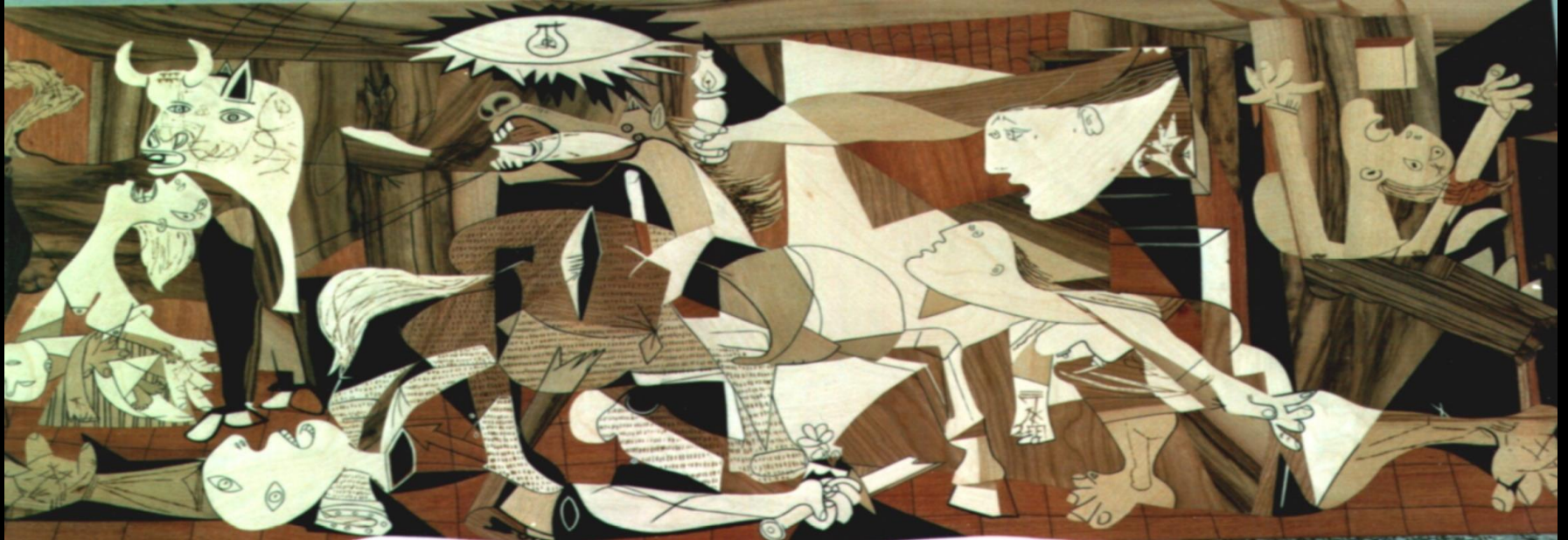
Adapted from: Duroch F *et al.* Medical Care Under Fire: An analysis of MSF 's experience of violence and insecurity in the field. Internal MSF report on the findings of the Medical Care Under Fire project, March 2016.

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

- Small visible part of **brutality of conflicts on civilians**
- Attacks on other hospitals, schools, markets, places of worships etc.

ATTACKS ON HOSPITAL

CONSEQUENCES



ENORMOUS SUFFERING FOR CIVILIANS

- Patients / care takers **killed or wounded**
- Destruction resulting in **loss of routine and emergency medical services**

KILLING OF IRREPLACEABLE HEALTH STAFF



Dr Hassan al-Araj, Hama Health
Governorate Director , killed 13
April 2016



Dr Mohammed Wasim Moaz,
Aleppo's Al Quds Hospital
Paediatrician, killed 28 April 2016

DESTROYING SPACES OF HUMANITY IN WARS

- Hospitals = symbolic
- Fear of seeking care
- A "war on civilians"?



CURRENT DYNAMICS

- 4 of 5 of the UNSC P5
- CT & means of warfare
- ‘Mistakes’, denials, justifications or silence
- Challenge to norms (e.g. IHL, refugee laws)

ATTACKS ON HOSPITAL

WHAT CAN WE DO?



*“MSF should deploy comprehensive efforts and take necessary actions that (1) contribute to ensure that attacks on medical facilities are prevented and (2) If they occur, result in the highest possible political price through high **public mobilization.**”*

MSF – OCTOBER 2015

UN SECURITY COUNCIL

“ Seeking or providing healthcare must not be a death sentence.

You will be judged not on your words today, but on your actions. Your work has only begun.

Make this resolution save lives.”

*United Nations Security Council briefing
May 3rd 2016*

DIFFERENCES OF ANALYSIS

- IHL vs. medical ethics
- Accountability
- Solidarity & relevance
- Name + shame vs. cautious attribution



MSF ASKS

- Seek reaffirmation of the protection of the medical mission
- Support for the obligation of health workers to treat all – **inc. those labelled as “terrorists” or “criminals”**
- Seek accountability & assignment of responsibility

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