

TEMOIGNAGE CASE BINDER (TCB) / SPEAKING OUT CASE STUDIES

In March 1998, the international council recognized the need to complete the Chantilly paper on 'témoignage' and the Code of conduct and to 'build up a live memory' on MSF experience. MSF USA's General Director volunteered to start the process.

In November 1998, the international council acknowledged that MSF's approach to témoignage cannot be define in purely instrumental terms, that 'the debate on témoignage [should] be taken out of the heat of current témoignage issues' and that there was a need to 'develop a better institutional memory' on this issue.

A commission was tasked to oversee the creation of a Témoignage Case Book.



Minutes from the MSF International Council Meeting, 19 March 1997 (in English).

Extract:

4) Further work on témoignage

It was decided and recalled during the Restricted Committee meeting that there is a need for a complementary text to the Chantilly paper and to the recently revised code of conduct for témoignage. P[hilippe] Biberson [MSF France President] was in charge of presenting a framework accordingly, but he could not do it. He added that unfortunately there was no summary of the témoignage workshop organised in Brussels.

There was an agreement in the meeting in reaffirming the necessity to build up a live memory by writing on our experience. This could be done by describing some typical situations for MSF, show how MSF reacted in terms of assistance and 'témoignage,' and give our perception of what happened. This would be useful for the field teams and in the training sessions.

Joelle Tanguy [MSF USA] took the responsibility to have this process starting and make sure it reaches some achievements.



Minutes from the MSF International Council Meeting, 6 November 1998 (in English).

Extract:

Témoignage

James Orbinski [MSF International President] briefly reviewed the importance of Témoignage for the MSF movement and highlighted the importance on following through on previous IC commitments to this issue. A discussion and clearer formulation of objectives followed.

The IC [International Council] strongly reaffirms that témoignage for 'populations in danger' is central to the identity, principles, values and purpose of the MSF movement. It also recognises that each context varies too much to create strict guidelines for témoignage, and that MSF's approach to témoignage cannot be

defined in purely instrumental terms. The exact nature of témoignage action in a particular circumstance is often contentious. The broader debate on témoignage needs to be taken out of 'the heat of current témoignage issues' so that we can learn from past témoignage experiences, and develop better institutional memory on this core MSF activity.

To this end, the IC mandates a Commission to oversee the preparation of a case book on témoignage over the next year. The Témoignage Case Book [TCB] will be primarily for internal use. It will emphasise témoignage as a core activity of the MSF movement, will focus on lessons learned, and will serve as a source of institutional memory for the movement. Both internal and external sources will be used to chronicle témoignage milestones in the MSF movement. These can include for example MSF témoignage actions in Cambodia, Kurdistan, Somalia, Rwanda, Zaire, Afghanistan and North Korea.

The challenge of 1) témoignage in non-emergency situations, and the new challenges of addressing our independence 2) relative to field-based co-ordination with other actors and 3) to NGO coalitions around issues of common concern will also be addressed in the Témoignage Case Book.

The Témoignage Case Book will be managed by a single co-ordinator under the supervision of the Executive Committee, which will be overseen by the IC Commission composed of four IC members who will monitor the progress of work. Those IC members who volunteered and were accepted are James Orbinski, Fiona Terry [MSF Australia], Jens Shillingsoe [MSF Hollande] and Phillipe Biberson [MSF France]. The commission will have the responsibility of ensuring that the Case Book reflects appropriate representation and input from across the MSF Movement, including particularly from the operational centres. Joelle Tanguy [MSF USA General Director], who has made a commitment in the past to the Case Book, reaffirmed this commitment and will also contribute. The Témoignage Case Book will be prepared for final presentation at the November 99 IC meeting, with progress reports to the international RC [restricted committee] and IC meetings.


In November 1999, the international council selected MSF representatives with experience and expertise to compose the Témoignage Case Binder Editorial Committee¹. They were to serve 'intuitu personae' and not to represent the MSF entity they were linked to.

Laurence Binet was nominated as coordinator of the project, in charge of researching and writing the studies. The MSF France Foundation was tasked with the administration of the project.

In June 2000, the editorial committee proposed a criteria list to identify cases to study. The main criteria was that cases should address crisis where speaking out posed a dilemma for MSF.

1. Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, Michiel Hofman, and Fiona Terry. Later on, the Editorial Committee will be enlarged by cooptation, welcoming the Secretary International.


The scope of projects, the singularity of each study, and the time estimated to conduct rigorous and proper research of cases were largely underestimated.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Meeting, 11-12 June 1999 (in English).

Extract:

Témoignage Case Binder


James Orbinski briefly reviewed progress to date on the Témoignage Case Binder, endorsed by the IC in November 98. The second proposal was circulated prior to the meeting to all IC members, and its general contents and purpose reviewed. The Témoignage Casebinder project will proceed as outlined in the Proposal, and a co-ordinator will be appointed by the editors, Fiona Terry and Françoise Saulnier. A budget will be prepared and given to Jean Marie Kindermans. The project should begin by the end of July, and be completed by March or April 2000.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Meeting, 27 November 1999 (in English).

Extract:

Update on IC Commissions on Finance and Témoignage

Work on the 'Témoignage Case Binder' has started. The editorial committee is made up of Françoise [Bouchet-] Saulnier, Fiona Terry and Michiel Hofman. Laurence Binet has been hired to write the Case Binder. La Fondation [of MSF France] is responsible for administering the project. Fiona Terry has resigned from the IC [International Council] Commission to join the editorial committee. A replacement will be sought. The role of the IC Commission now is to mediate and decide in the case of an irresolvable dispute in the editorial committee.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Meeting, 10 June 2000 (in English).

Extract:


Témoignage Case binder

Fiona Terry made an update on the Témoignage Case binder. The aim of the Témoignage Case binder is to document missions where MSF engaged in Témoignage, as well as creating an institutional memory. It is to show dilemmas MSF faced throughout its history and highlight the results of Témoignage within each context. A list of criterias was elaborated to facilitate the task of the Editorial Committee when it came to choosing the missions to be used. It was agreed that all cases should show a dilemma faced by MSF, such as expulsion, staff security, a risk for the MSF image, etc. The cases should also show different contexts, be based in different locations and involve several sections. Examples of missions/cases that will be analysed in the Case binder are²:

Famous cases such as Biafra (1972) will be included.
Vietnam 1978 MSF split around the 'Ile de Lumière' case

Ethiopia 1984-1985 Split between MSF-B [elgium] and MSF F[rance]
Liberia 1993 Access denied, & témoignage reached the highest level of the UN
Bosnia 1993 Example of the dilemma of denouncing v. operationality
Rwanda 1994 MSF B[elgium] declared a situation of genocide
North Korea 1998 Pullout


The process has now reached interview level throughout the different sections. The Témoignage Case binder is scheduled for completion in November 2000. Finally, although the mandate is that this is to be an internal document, another version may be published for MSF's 30th anniversary.

 *It was about going through MSF History, case by case, going in detail to show what was the debate going on within the movement, within the sections, between the field and the headquarters at the very moment that choices had to be made. So it was decided to go for a sort of chronological presentation, each day after each day, cross - referencing the information and the documentation to make sure that we were as close as possible to what was really happening and not to what was said later on.*

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF Legal advisor from 1991, member of the Témoignage Case Binder/ MSF Speaking Out Case Studies Series Editorial Committee from 2000 (in French)

In November 2001, the first draft of the 'Genocide of Rwandan Tutsis' case study was presented to the international council. Some IC members, each for different reasons, challenged the 'objectivity' of the narrative. This narrative was based on information set out in documents extracted from the quite disordered MSF archives and in interviews with MSF stakeholders to events whose recollections were sometimes too emotional to be fully reliable. In addition, the events dealt with in these cases had occurred only five years earlier and created a profound and lasting controversy between individuals and sections.

The IC decided to reinstall the IC committee to supervise the editorial committee in reviewing the methodology of the project.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Meeting, 24 November 2001 (in English, edited).

Extract:

a) ITEM 4 Témoignage Case Binder

The Great Lakes case was presented to the IC and introduced by Fiona Terry.

The project started about three years ago and became more and more ambitious as time went by. A lot of people were interviewed. This then needed to be written out. Furthermore, as a lot of

2. This list would be refined as the project moved forward

information is based on memory and therefore has different interpretations and different versions, piecing it all together is proving to be a lot of work also. A lot of comments were made:

a. The lack of written material and the fact that we have to rely on recollections implies a certain amount of subjectivity which we will not be able to avoid. This is never going to be a perfect piece of work.

b. A comment was made about the fact that the quality of the TCB will not be helped by the fact that one person alone oversees the 22 cases – there are too many dimensions, too much contextual information for one person to digest and reproduce clearly.

c. A choice needs to be made with regard to the context setting: either it is a historical piece of work and the level of accuracy needs to reflect this or it is a journalistic endeavour and we have to take our responsibility for the unavoidable simplifications. Furthermore, initially it was to be an educational tool, and some felt that the TCB produced does not reach that objective.


d. Concern was raised over various issues, such as the fact that some of the key people of the time did not appear to have been interviewed (in fact, every section was asked to provide a list of key people to be interviewed, most of those were interviewed, a choice then had to be made for the verbatim as some were more accurate, clearer, more verbal than others); there were spelling mistakes in the names of some of the people, questions were raised on the use of the verbatim – some felt it took attention away from the issue at hand, others felt that it gave the context a real voice.

Therefore,

The editorial committee has taken into account the concerns voiced by the International Council, will re-address the methodology and welcomes the creation of an IC committee to which it will present one case.

The IC decided in 1998 to launch a project to develop a case binder on 'témoignage'. The editorial committee presented a case study at the IC meeting November 2001. The IC reaffirms its interest in a document allowing it to capitalise on MSF's history in terms of 'témoignage'. The draft presented did not meet the IC's expectations. The IC has therefore decided to re-establish the IC committee on the Témoignage Case Binder. The role of the committee will be to oversee the future development of the case studies on 'Genocide in Rwanda' and the 'Retreat from the Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania'. This finished case study will be presented to the IC Board to allow decisions as to further progress.

The IC committee is made up of Stefania Dente, Leslie Shanks, Lisette Luykx, Barbara Kerstiens, Morten Rostrup.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Meeting, 13 April 2002 (in English, edited).

Extract:


IV. Témoignage Case Binder

The TCB commission submitted its report, which has been sent to the editorial committee and the IC Board. At the same time the Foundation in Paris had its evaluation. There are now what

seems to be two options in terms of the future TCB project (the simple transcription and the TCB commission's proposal). There will be a meeting between the editorial committee and the TCB commission, and the matter will be presented to the IC for a final decision. Rafa to follow up.

In October 2002, two drafts using a new methodology were presented. They covered the 'MSF Speaking Out' dilemmas and controversies during 'The Genocide of Rwandan Tutsis in 1994' and the crisis of the 'Salvadoran Refugee Camps in Honduras in 1988'.

Instead of a narrative, the main text was a chronological editing of extracts of documents and interviews linked by short introductions. Every assertion of the introductory link should be confirmed by the extracts of document or interview. The international council board and the executive committee highlighted and endorsed the pedagogic aspect of this methodology. The Témoignage Case Binder (TCB) was then seen as a tool for MSF training courses on political issues.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Board/ExCom Meeting, 12 October 2002 (in English).

Extract:

II. Témoignage Case Binder

Two cases were presented: the Great Lakes and Honduras. The two cases consist of a very summarized synopsis of the context, the verbatims, a chronogram and the public documents related to the case. The discussion focused on the fact that the synopsis was shorter than originally requested by the IC TCB commission, some also felt that the dilemmas related to each case were not clearly stated. The reason being that a longer synopsis would have automatically been more controversial – and the same would apply to the dilemmas linked to each case (even so, some of the dilemmas are very briefly mentioned in the synopsis). It is impossible to come up with one 'history' of the case.

Comment was made on the fact that the pedagogic aspect of the Témoignage Case Binder comes from the diversity of the material provided. The reader is therefore forced to make up his/her own mind. This could be used as a training document – MSF has very few training courses on political issues for its decision-makers – this could be the ideal tool to be used as a basis for such a training. Furthermore, it could help fuel debates inside MSF whereby, upon the release of each case, opposing opinions could be confronted.

Re the editorial committee: little work left for them to do. Nevertheless, Barbara will try to find somebody in MSF B to read through the synopsis.

Therefore,

The ICB agrees to proceed as with the Great Lakes and Honduras cases.

There are 10 cases pending, five will be finalised this year, another five next year (by June 2003).

It may be interesting to proactively communicate on the cases upon their individual release (communication plan?)

In June 2003, the international council endorsed three more cases: 'Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaire and Tanzania 1994-1995'; 'The Violence of the New Rwandan Regime 1994-1995'; 'Hunting and Killings of Rwandan Refugee in Zaire-Congo 1996-1997'.

A review of the TCB project was planned by the end of 2004 to lead to a decision on maintaining the project as ongoing or not.



Minutes from the MSF International Council Meeting, 27-29 June 2003 (in English, edited).

Extract:

Témoignage Case Binder

Three completed cases were presented to the IC for final approval. Rafa presented the present situation and suggested that this project become an ongoing one. A discussion was held and the following comments and concerns were expressed:

Re the usefulness of the tool

Some felt that this had limited usefulness, that it would not necessarily serve as a launch pad for debates and that sufficient resources had already been allocated to it. Others argued that the TCB fulfilled one of our most important mandates – that of 'témoignage'. The reason this project was initiated in the first place was the lack of institutional memory within MSF, and this project helped us fulfil this duty to safeguard an institutional memory of the dilemmas we have faced. Furthermore, it makes us accountable for our actions. Some of these events had divisive effects internally, and presenting them in such a way defuses the potential fights and helps us better debate these difficult issues/dilemmas.

Re: The role of the IC

Some felt that the IC's involvement in this project had overrun its course and that it should be part of the executive's responsibilities.

Re: The future/how to use the TCB

How do we make sure that it will be used? Some of it is dependent on the sections' commitment to use it as a training tool and integrate it into their training programmes. A second aspect will be linked to the way this tool will be launched – the proposal is to organise a conference based on the dilemmas faced in the future/dilemmas faced today and include this into a communication plan that is being developed. Furthermore, the TCB will be available on Tukul, and it will be possible to integrate new material into the cases depending on the relevance and importance of the new information (e.g. finding an important document that had been missing, etc.).

Conclusion

- 1) The IC approves the present layout and methodology as portrayed in the three cases presented to it.
- 2) The TCB team should finalise the six cases presently in the pipeline (2003-2004). The ExCom commits to overseeing the implementation of the TCB as a tool within MSF.

3) An evaluation will be made at the end of 2004 to decide whether to transform this project into an ongoing project (depending on feasibility and its use across the movement – feedback to be given by the executive) – a decision will also be made at that time on cases that had been planned and/or their substitution by new cases.

In January 2004, MSF Belgium's board issued a resolution asking that the Case Binders remain confidential and strictly internal unless the international council decided otherwise. In October 2004, the international council board set up a TCB distribution policy. Reasserting that the TCB is an internal MSF document, this policy allowed its release externally only under the authority of a member of the international council, adhering to specific guidelines: that access should be granted to individuals known and trusted by MSF, for a clear pedagogical purpose and providing they do not mention the names of those interviewed or who are otherwise mentioned in the document, unless their permission is obtained. They should also quote the document as an internal MSF document they had been granted access to.



Minutes from the MSF Belgium Board Meeting, 9 January 2004 (in French).

Extract:

2. Témoignage Case Binder

In 1998, the IC proposed to work on the elaboration of case binders on speaking out in different crises, intended for the training of our expatriates and therefore for internal use. However, it seems that these documents are not treated with all the required confidentiality throughout the movement. Some would like to share them with journalists (which is also proposed by ExCom under the guise of verifying legal procedures) and research institutes.

The Board is concerned that the different sections interpret the 'internal use' of the 'Témoignage Case Binder' differently, whereas the IC has not decided to make them public.

The Board requests that the confidentiality of documents be guaranteed and that no distribution take place without the agreement of the IC.

Indeed:

- The publication of these documents would run counter to our policy of testifying before international tribunals (implicitly accepted policy as per the Special Court for Sierra Leone, including the rule that domestic documents are not released).
- We have a moral obligation not to distribute the texts without the prior agreement of the individuals (local staff, expats) or organisations mentioned.
- The title 'Speaking out' does not correspond to reality, since sitreps [situation reports], faxes and minutes of board meetings of different sections are included, documents which have no public significance, but are part of our archives.

Also, these communications, faxes and sitreps are currently being written under the cover of MSF confidentiality. It is clear that, if these documents are to become public, we run the risk that our heads of mission or operations managers will only report banalities.

A message to the DGs and presidents of all sections will be sent out on Monday to make everyone aware of the issues.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Board Meeting, 4 February 2004, Brussels (in English, edited).


Extract:

Agreement on Témoignage Case Binder (TCB)

Discussion started with a review of the MSF B[elgium] board resolution. Françoise Saulnier's [MSF legal advisor and member of the TCB editorial committee] response on the legal questions raised was distributed but was not discussed specifically. A discussion followed on the concerns about distribution of the TCB.

Points made included:

- What is the difference between confidential and internal? It was agreed that TCB could not be considered a confidential document as it was always intended for use as a training tool and should be considered an internal document. The definition of internal remains unclear, though. It was suggested that presidents look into how 'internal' documents are usually handled in their sections and the access which is given to journalists and researchers to internal docs.
- Internal MSF discussions are made richer and more useful through the involvement of external actors. These external people would need access to internal documents to make the discussion worthwhile.
- Specifically, and as stated in their board resolution, MSF B feels strongly that sharing the TCB with people outside MSF goes against their own policies on sharing of internal documents (especially with regards to courts). MSF B also raised specific concerns about:
 - o People who were interviewed and did not know that their contribution would go outside MSF. They feel that everybody should be warned in an individual way and that if people oppose the publication of their name, they be taken out. Otherwise, this is a breach of confidence.
 - o People who were quoted and whose words were used without them knowing at all (use of situation reports).
 - o The organisation is 'criticised' in the TCB and there is a question as to who should be informed beforehand on the circulation of the document (i.e. ICRC).
- MSF B's position is that under the present format and without a clear policy on how the document should be distributed, the document should not be given to people outside MSF. They insist that clear guidelines on how to make the document available to the external public be drafted. It should address the three concerns raised by their board.
- It was agreed that the IO should draft a paper such as this, with the informed advice of lawyers and journalists.
- Jean-Hervé [Bradol, MSF France president] proposed that an internal conference on Rwanda be held to debate about MSF history and the dilemmas in Rwanda. The proposition was accepted and the ExCom/dir com asked to organise.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Board Meeting, 8-9 October 2004, Paris (in English, edited).

Extract:

TCB distribution policy

At the meeting, the proposed TCB distribution policy was further debated. As a few changes were proposed, presidents asked for a delay to consult with their boards. The decision was taken to organise an electronic vote after the ICB meeting.

The ICB electronic vote unanimously approved the TCB distribution policy on 21 October, with a specific request that the remark on the status of document ('internal use only') is made immediately visible to readers and put it on the first page.

Text of the policy:

The Témoignage Case Binder is an Internal MSF Document.


It can only be released externally under the authority of a member of the international council, adhering to the following guidelines:

1. This access should be granted to individuals known and trusted by MSF and for a clear pedagogical purpose
2. It is understood that this applies to a small group of people and they agree to the conditions of use (below).

Conditions of Use by both MSF and external individuals

1. *There will be no mention of the names of individuals interviewed or otherwise mentioned in this document, unless their permission is obtained, while referring to this document outside of MSF both orally and in writing.*
2. *When quoting this document it will be referred to as an internal MSF document that has been accessed.*

In November 2004, the international council noted that while the first five TCB cases fulfilled the objective of building institutional memory, the results of its pedagogic use were mixed. The IC decided to continue the project on the basis of two cases per year and tasked the executive with developing a plan for its use as a training tool.

 **Minutes** from the MSF International Council Meeting, 19 November 2004, Geneva (in English, edited).

Extract:

Témoignage Case Binder

Background:

In order for the IC to make a decision on the continuation of the TCB project, the TCB editorial committee (EC) has requested Laure Bonnevie (IO) to provide an overview of the use of the TCB in sections. This overview was first debated at EC level before being presented to the IC.

TCB Editorial Committee Recommendations to the IC

The TCB editorial committee warmly welcomes the distribution policy validated by the ICB.

After reviewing the conclusions of the overview and reflecting on the development of the project since 1998, it appears that:

- The first five cases – by gathering information from all sides and putting on the table dilemmas faced by MSF – fulfilled the

initial objective as a central tool for institutional memory building.

- As a pedagogic tool, the results are mixed and revealed weaknesses in the implementation of the TCB in trainings. Therefore, the TCB editorial committee would like to recommend:

- That the IC renew its support and commitment to the TCB project which has now reached a satisfying methodology and rhythm, on the basis of two cases per year. Indeed, as it provides a good basis to understand humanitarian dilemmas, it can help to reinforce MSF's identity and role in a changing world and in shaping the debate outside.

- In order to improve the use of the TCB as a training resource, the Executive should develop a plan for proper distribution and integration of the TCB in training programmes and strategies. In particular, the TCB should be well known and distributed at least in the regions affected by the existing cases (Latin America, Great Lakes).

- That the IC asks the executive to report in a year on the distribution and use of the TCB as a training tool.

Main outcomes of the discussion:

- Re the question of methodology: the right format has now been found and, according to the feedback of the survey, there is no question about the need to review it. Also the ICB had requested that people who were interviewed were informed that their name would appear in the document -> the IO sent prior to the IC meeting individual letters to all interviewees to inform them that they were quoted in the document. These letters also included a clarification on the distribution policy.

- Re the option to have an alternative section to develop the project -> was not addressed in the survey.

- Re the use of the TCB as a training tool -> IC members were informed that there was a plan for a meeting between the EC and the trainers' group so as to explain to them how to use the TCB in trainings.

- Re the budget: it amounted to 350,000 euros for the first five years of the project (2000-2004).

- Re the continuation of the project, what would be the next cases, and on what criteria would they be chosen? -> Three types of criteria are taken into account:

- o Dilemma

- o Institutional risk for MSF

- o Concern linked to speaking out

On the upcoming cases: two cases are being looked into for 2005:

- o Kosovo 1998 (operational dilemma linked to speaking out, refugee camps and funding issues)

- o North Korea (dilemma linked to lack of access to people in need, manipulation of humanitarian aid, financial issues and conflicting vision with other humanitarian actors)

Decision:

Based on the overview requested by the IC and on the recommendations made by the TCB editorial committee, the IC approved the continuation of the TCB project and the overall recommendations of the editorial committee on the basis of two cases per year.

Moreover, the IC members will encourage distribution and use based on the two agreed objectives (institutional memory and training tool) and ask the executive to look for indicators to assess the implementation (executive to report to the IC in a year).

However, the IC asks the TCB editorial committee for a two-page clarification on the following:

- Criteria to choose the cases
- Methodology used
- Reminder of the role and composition of the editorial committee
- Decision-making process
- Arguments to support the choice of the next two proposed cases (North Korea and Kosovo).

In January 2007, an international debate on the Kosovo crisis that led to MSF Greece's exclusion and based on the TCB 'Violence against Kosovar Albanians, NATO's intervention 1998-1999' was held in Athens. This debate was the last requirement for the MSF Greece reintegration in the MSF movement.



Report on Kosovo Debate – Extraordinary General Assembly MSF Greece, 13 January 2007 (in English).

Extract:

At the beginning, the president of the Assembly, Panos Katrakis, made a short presentation of the TCB [témoignage case binder] 'Violence against Kosovar Albanians, NATO's intervention 1998-1999', written by Laurence Binet, stating how:

- it complements the history of the MSF movement and
- describes the way the movement handled the crisis. His desire is for the debate to be objective and open to all opinions, without tensions or hard criticism. [...]

Christophe Fournier [president of MSF international council]: MSF Gr[eece] is back in full in the international movement. Attesting to this is the presence of people from all MSF sections, having this debate. Maybe there is remaining frustration for the expulsion, expressed by MSF Gr members, but self-criticism is very important and this is a way to maturity. Regarding expulsion: if the same decision was to be made again, it would be made differently & more carefully. Internationalism in the movement may work for impartiality but it doesn't provide a lot of independence for each section's culture and society.

Interest from outsiders, students, academics and journalists for the TCBs, renamed MSF Speaking Out Case Studies (SOCS) increased as time went on. In 2010, the introductions and the chronologies included in each case binder were posted on the website of the CRASH, the MSF Foundation Centre of reflection which at the time was hosting the project on behalf of the IC.

In 2012, the SOCS editorial committee proposed to the international board (IB) that all the studies should be posted online. The board agreed, providing that every interviewee mentioned in the studies authorises his/her account and name being kept in the public study. A process was completed to get these agreements.

The series (10 cases at the time) was gradually re-edited and put on line from September 2013: <http://speakingout.msf.org/en>



Minutes from the MSF International Board Meeting, 11-13 June 2012 (in English, edited).

Extract:

Speaking Out Case Studies (SOCS)

In the past, the IC oversaw the Speaking Out Case Studies (SOCS). The IB is now responsible for the portfolio. Laurence Binet [SOCS director of research] joins the IB to present a request on the dissemination of the case studies.

She informs the IB that the SOCS studies are disseminated in MSF only. Since 2006 [actually 2004], the IC softened the conditions of use. Researchers and students can have access to them if they undertake not to mention interviewee names without permission. MSF has been approached by researchers, journalists and students who requested access to these studies, notably since the introductions and timelines have been available online on the CRASH website. She proposes to post the entire collection of studies on line. The issue is that most interviewees agreed to have their names in the studies, to share with fellow MSFers. The editorial committee agrees with the idea of contacting the interviewees and asking them whether they agree to have their name in the online versions of the studies. For future studies, permission would be asked from the outset.

Most IB members are in principle in favour of opening up the documents and sharing, as long as sources and confidentiality are protected. Jose Antonio suggests removing all names to save time and effort and have a homogenous position. However, for Laurence, the studies would lose a lot of their interest for the reader without the names of the interviewees, as a previous study on Chechnya where some names of national staff were removed for security reasons showed. Jose Antonio explains his suggestion would also help protect MSF legally and from the press.

In conclusion, the IB agrees in principle on openness, but has questions on the consequences and requests that the editorial committee convene, review the options and provide feedback to the IB.

the case studies online. Jerome reviews some of the challenges encountered so far by the executive, including some sensitivity around the publication of the North Korea and Chechnya case studies. As part of the new process for the SOCS series moving forward, the RIOD will be given responsibility for disseminating information about the case studies ahead of their publication. There is a process in place already whereby the case studies are reviewed by the ExCom. The next SOCS publications will include: no. 11 Yugoslavia, no. 12 Darfur & no. 13 the History of the Association in MSF.

Session outcome:

The IB re-establishes and agrees to the process of online publishing of the SOCS series as approved by the IB in 2012.



MSF International Board **Main Outcomes** Related to IB Meeting of 3-4 December 2012 (in English).

Extract:

Speaking Out Case Studies (SOCS)

The IB appreciates the considerable and longstanding work by Laurence Binet on the SOCS project and endorses the recommendation of the SOCS editorial committee and approves the two new initiatives: SOCS online and SOCS History project. The IB furthermore chooses to begin the SOCS History project by examining the development and role of the associative in MSF.



Final Minutes & Outcomes, MSF International Board, 15-17 December 2014, Paris (in English).

Extract:

Speaking Out Case Studies (SOCS)

Darin [Portnoy, IB member, liaison between IB and SOCS editorial committee] updates on the SOCS website project. The online versions have undergone a process of editing by an editorial committee and approval by participants in the studies to share