

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 1973-1986

The main purpose of this chronology is to help the reader by reconstructing MSF's actions and public statements in regional and international news reports of the period. It is intended as a tool for this specific document, and not as an academic reference.

| | International | Ethiopia | MSF Operations |
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| 1973/74 | | Famine in Ethiopia (200,000 deaths) – <u>RRC</u> (Relief and Rehabilitation Commission) created. | |
| 1974 | | September 1974 <u>Ethiopian Emperor</u> Haile Selassie overthrown. | |
| 1977 | USA refuses to supply arms, Ethiopia becomes USSR's ally. USSR breaks its alliance with Somalia, a strategically less important country. | <u>Colonel Mengistu's DERG</u> (Provisional Military and Administrative Council) imposes a reign of terror. | |
| 1978 | | <u>Eritrean independence fighters</u> clash with the Ethiopian government. | |
| Early 1980s | | | <u>MSF France</u> conducts clandestine surgical missions in the Eritrea and Tigray provinces of Ethiopia. MSF France begins surgical and physical therapy activities for Tigrayan refugees in camps in the Sudan. |
| 1983 | | Drought and famine in the <u>northern (Wollo, Tigre), eastern (Harargue), and western (Wollega, Illubabor) regions</u> . <u>Mengistu</u> denies the existence of the famine but authorises the <u>RRC</u> to open food distribution centres for the 'drought'. | |
| 1984 | | Early 1984 Report from the <u>Commission for the Organisation of the Workers' Party</u> : 'Ethiopia Can Deal with This on its Own.' | |
| FEB. 1984 | | | February 1984 At the <u>RRC's</u> request, <u>MSF France</u> conducts an evaluation mission in Korem. |

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| MAR. 1984 | | 30 March 1984 RRC appeals to international aid donors for 450,000 tonnes of food; 87,000 tonnes provided initially. | |
| APRIL 1984 | | | April 1984 <u>MSF France</u> opens a mission in Korem (Wollo); five volunteers. |
| MAY 1984 | | | May 1984 <u>Liberté Sans Frontières (LSF)</u> created at <u>MSF France</u> General Assembly. <u>MSF France</u> alerts <u>World Food Program (WFP)</u> of high mortality rates in Korem. <u>WFP</u> speaks about it on the BBC. |
| JUNE 1984 | June 1984 <u>Mengistu</u> tells the <u>World Food Council</u> that Ethiopia's food situation is under control. | | |
| JULY 1984 | | | July 1984 <u>MSF France</u> opens a mission in Kobo. Displaced people return home, hoping for rain. |
| SEPT. 1984 | | September 1984 Starving farming populations arrive en masse in Korem (no rain). 12 September 1984 Celebration of the revolution's 10th anniversary and founding of the <u>Ethiopian Workers' Party</u> – major media coverage. | Beginning September 1984 <u>MSF France</u> team talks to many journalists visiting Korem. |
| OCT. 1984 | | 3 October 1984 <u>Mengistu</u> delivers speech acknowledging existence of the famine. | Early October 1984 <u>MSF Holland</u> is founded. |

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| OCT. 1984 | <p>23 October 1984 BBC broadcast reports on the famine in Ethiopia, rebroadcast by 425 stations around the world.</p> <p>October 1984 Fundraising campaigns for Ethiopia around the world.</p> | <p>26 October 1984 <u>National Committee for Natural Disasters and Rehabilitation (CNDR)</u> is created. It is close to the regime and supplants the <u>RRC</u>.</p> | <p>October 1984 The situation for the <u>MSF France</u> mission in Korem improves.</p> |
| NOV. 1984 | | <p>16 November 1984 <u>Mengistu</u> announces that national priority is to transfer 1.5 million northerners to the south.</p> | |
| DEC. 1984 | <p>3 December 1984 The British NGO, War on Want, accuses the <u>Ethiopian</u> government of diverting aid to starve the population in the rebel zones.</p> | | |
| DEC. 1984 | <p>December 1984 Immense media mobilisation to aid <u>Ethiopian</u> famine victims; Band Aid and <u>Chanteurs Sans Frontières</u> recordings. 100,000 tonnes of food per month delivered to Ethiopia.</p> | <p>Late 1984 200,000 people resettled in the <u>South</u>.</p> | <p>December 1984 Korem (Wollo): <u>MSF France</u> and <u>SCF</u> discover camp is half empty after a raid.</p> |
| 1985 JAN. 1985 | <p>January 1985 International press questions the <u>Ethiopian</u> regime's management of aid.</p> | | <p>January 1985 <u>MSF France</u> team in Korem speaks to visiting journalists. <u>MSF France</u> team prohibited to circulate in the Korem camp. Grain and blankets requisitioned for 'volunteers' at time of departure for transit camps.</p> |

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| JAN. 1985 | | <p>17 January 1985 <u>Ethiopian government</u> seizes a food cargo heading to the rebel zone.</p> <p>21 January 1985 Diplomatic counterattack by <u>Ethiopian government</u> regarding criticism of its handling of aid. Ethiopian cadres mobilised for resettlement operation in the south.</p> | <p>10 January 1985 MSF France press conference as <u>Liberté Sans Frontières</u> (LSF) is launched.</p> <p>20 January 1985 <u>MSF Belgium</u> expresses reservations about LSF's founding.</p> <p>23-24 January 1985 'Challenging <i>Tiers-mondisme</i>' symposium organised by <u>Liberté Sans Frontières</u>.</p> |
| FEB. 1985 | | <p>9 February 1985 <u>Ethiopian government</u> accuses aid organisations of squandering aid.</p> | <p>10 February 1985 Letter from <u>MSF</u> teams in <u>Chad</u> (all sections) opposing LSF.</p> <p>22 February 1985 In Korem, authorities prohibit <u>MSF France</u> team from distributing blankets, clothing and tents. Curfew extended.</p> |

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| MAR. 1985 | | | <p>Early March 1985 MSF France and SCF teams once again discover the Korem camp half empty after soldiers conduct a raid. Soldiers also entered the hospitals.</p> <p>12 March 1985 MSF Belgium's management and board send association members a packet of information opposing LSF.</p> <p>March 1985 MSF Belgium opens a programme in Idaga Hammous near Adigre (Tigre).</p> |
| | | <p>13 March 1985 RRC issues an international appeal for aid.</p> <p>14 March 1985 National Committee for Natural Disasters and Rehabilitation (CNDR) holds press conference claiming that negative stories about resettlement programmes have been exaggerated and invented.</p> | <p>Late March 1985 MSF France board raises questions about the forced resettlements. MSF Holland conducts evaluation mission among Ethiopian refugees in Somalia.</p> |
| APRIL 1985 | | <p>8 April 1985 Mengistu speaks to the Central Committee of the Ethiopian Workers Party: "There is no alternative to the collectivisation of farmers."</p> | <p>Early April 1985 Combined MSF teams (Belgium/France/Holland) work with Ethiopian refugees in Hargeissa (Somalia).</p> <p>5 April 1985 MSF Belgium's board decides to break relations with MSF France.</p> |

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| APRIL 1985 | | <p>April-May 1985 Cholera in Korem and Kobo, but use of the word “cholera” prohibited; gastroenteritis is used instead.</p> | <p>19 April 1985 MSF France talks about cholera in an international meeting and narrowly avoids expulsion.</p> |
| | | <p>28 April 1985 57,000 displaced persons in the <u>Ibnet</u> camp (Gondar) are dispersed violently.</p> | <p>27 April 1985 <u>MSF Belgium</u> General Assembly decides to break all relations with <u>MSF France</u> as long as the latter remains connected to LSF.</p> |
| | <p>29 April 1985 <u>The Washington Post</u> published an article on the Ibnet events.</p> | <p>29 April 1985 <u>Mengistu</u> says that the Ibnet events are just an exceptional blunder.</p> | |
| MAY 1985 | | <p>1 May 1985 <u>Mengistu</u> denounces the “imperialist forces’ criticism of the resettlement project”.</p> | <p>3 May 1985 After the <u>Ibnet</u> events, <u>MSF France</u> President of Board of Directors, Rony Brauman speaks to <u>Libération</u> (France) about the problems of continuing to work in Ethiopia. <u>MSF France</u> Board of Directors decides to initiate legal action to withdraw <u>MSF Belgium</u>’s right to use the MSF name.</p> |
| | | | <p>Early May 1985 <u>MSF France</u>’s General Assembly: <u>MSF Belgium</u> questions LSF’s existence and the responsibility of the management team. <u>MSF Belgium</u> attacks LSF in <u>Le Monde Diplomatique</u>: ‘A Foundation above Reproach’.</p> |

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| MAY 1985 | | | 17-20 May 1985 <u>MSF France</u> evaluation mission in the <u>Sekota</u> region. |
| | Late May 1985 International press criticises diversion and manipulation of aid in the context of East-West relations. | | |
| JUNE 1985 | | | Early June 1985 <u>MSF France</u> evaluation mission in the Kelala region. |
| JULY 1985 | 12 July 1985 Concert in London (<u>Wembley</u>) and <u>Philadelphia</u> organised by <u>Band Aid</u> , to benefit <u>Ethiopian</u> famine victims. | July 1985 <u>Ethiopian government</u> temporarily halts transfers and resettlement. | July 1985 <u>MSF France</u> opens medical assistance programmes in Kelala and Sekota, <u>MSF's</u> first request to open a therapeutic feeding centre in Kelala. <u>MSF Belgium</u> opens programme in <u>Zalambessa</u> . |
| | July-August 1985 <u>International Federation of the Red Cross</u> conducts a discreet evaluation in the resettlement areas. | | 15 July 1985 <u>MSF France</u> loses lawsuit filed in a Belgian court to deny <u>MSF Belgium</u> use of the MSF name. |
| AUG. 1985 | | August 1985 The RRC asks farmers from the Maichew region, living as displaced persons in <u>Korem</u> , to return home and authorises the <u>Red Cross</u> to distribute cereal to them. | August 1985 <u>MSF France</u> receives the <u>Cultural Survival</u> reports including statements by <u>Ethiopian</u> refugees in <u>Sudan</u> who fled during the forced resettlement operations. |
| SEPT. 1985 | | 17 September 1985 At CRDA meeting, Father Jack Finucane of <u>Concern</u> states that the death rate during population transfers was 15-20%. | |
| OCT. 1985 | | Early October 1985 Forced transfers resume. <u>Red Cross</u> prohibited from delivering food to starving <u>Maichew</u> residents who, upon returning to food distribution centres, are rounded up. | 7 October 1985 <u>MSF France Medical Coordinator</u> makes new request to open therapeutic feeding centre in <u>Kelala</u> . |

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| OCT. 1985 | <p>Mid-October 1985 Discussion in the USA regarding Ethiopian regime's famine policy. <u>Cultural Survival</u> testifies before Congress.</p> <p>26 October 1985 <u>Korem</u> events reported in the international press.</p> | <p>19 October 1985 At CRDA meeting: Father Jack Finucane of <u>Concern</u> downplays his 17 September comments regarding the number of deaths during population transfers.</p> | <p>22 October 1985 <u>MSF France</u> president speaks at the <u>British-American Press Club</u> in Paris. He denounces the blockade on the opening of a centre in Kelala and says if <u>MSF</u> does not receive authorisation, it will pull out.</p> <p>23 October 1985 <u>MSF France</u> General Director makes new request to open therapeutic feeding centre in Kelala.</p> <p>24 October 1985 <u>RRC</u> accuses <u>MSF</u> of conducting a disinformation campaign.</p> <p>25 October 1985 20,000 people flee <u>Korem</u> camp in the middle of the night. 600 forced into trucks as <u>MSF France</u> team watches.</p> <p>28 October 1985 The board of <u>MSF France</u> decides to publicise the difficulties of working in <u>Ethiopia</u>.</p> |

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| OCT. 1985 | <p>29 October 1985 The <u>UN</u> representative in Ethiopia urges donors to fund the resettlement programme.</p> | | <p>31 October 1985 Press conference and discussion in Paris between the <u>MSF France</u> President of Board of Directors and <u>RRC Commissioner Dawit Georgis</u>, who promises to authorise the opening of a therapeutic centre at Kelala.</p> |
| NOV. 1985 | | <p>7 November 1985 Official visit to Kelala by the <u>RCC</u>, a <u>UN</u> representative and <u>ambassadors</u>. They refuse to meet 'departure candidates', despite <u>MSF's</u> warning.</p> | <p>November 1985 <u>MSF France</u> replies to <i>Le Monde Diplomatique's</i> criticisms of LSF. At Kelala, the <u>MSF France</u> team discovers 800 people rounded up in an open field. They had been there a week, awaiting their forced transfer by lorries.</p> <p>3 November 1985 <u>MSF</u> quoted in a <i>Sunday Times</i> (UK) article: 'At least 50,000 people dead during Ethiopian population transfers.'</p> <p>5 November 1985 In <i>Libération</i> (France), the <u>President of MSF France Board of Directors</u> calls for a three-month moratorium on the transfers. Distribution of the <u>MSF</u> confidential report 'Mass Deportations in Ethiopia'.</p> |

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| NOV. 1985 | <p>20 November 1985 The <u>UN Office for Emergency Operations</u> in Africa states it has no information to confirm that tens of thousands of <u>Ethiopians</u> have died during the transfer operations.</p> | <p>21 November 1985 <u>RRC</u> Deputy Commissioner tells <u>AFP</u>: “<u>MSF</u> is conducting a defamation campaign. Its aims are political rather than humanitarian.”</p> | <p>14 November 1985 Interview with the President of <u>MSF France</u> Board of Directors in <u>Paris-Match</u>: “In Ethiopia, your money finances massive deportations.”</p> <p>15 November 1985 Meeting in Addis Ababa between the President of <u>MSF France</u> Board of Directors and the new <u>UN representative</u>, who says he has “no reason to believe that people are being forced to leave the distribution centres”.</p> <p>16 November 1985 A meeting between <u>MSF France</u> and the <u>RRC</u> is unexpectedly transformed into a press conference and informal court.</p> <p>20 November 1985 Letter from <u>MSF</u> to the <u>RRC Deputy Commissioner</u>, suggesting an assessment mission in the resettlement zones.</p> <p>21 November 1985 Letter from <u>MSF France</u> to the <u>UN representative</u> in Ethiopia, requesting his thoughts on the fact that the departure criteria for the resettlement programme are being ignored.</p> <p>25 November 1985 The <u>MSF France</u> team fights to stop the forced transfer of 100 people from Sekota.</p> <p>26 November 1985 The <u>MSF France</u> team discovers 200 people locked in a church at Sekota, awaiting transfer.</p> |

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| NOV. 1985 | | <p>27 November 1985 <u>RRC</u> issues a document denouncing the allegations in the media and extolling the benefits of resettlement.</p> | <p>29 November 1985 Letter from <u>MSF France</u> to <u>RRC</u> condemning the incidents at Sekota.</p> |
| DEC. 1985 | <p>7 December 1985 An <u>OXFAM</u> nurse claims that resettlement is not voluntary. <u>OXFAM</u> expresses concern but says it does not envisage a withdrawal.</p> | <p>3 December 1985 <u>RRC</u> says it has accepted “<u>MSF</u>’s offer to terminate its operations in Ethiopia”.</p> | <p>2 December 1985 <u>MSF France</u> in Addis receives notice of its expulsion from <u>RRC</u>. This is followed by the freezing of bank accounts, restriction of staff movements, and the grounding of aircraft.</p> <p>3 December 1985 <u>MSF France</u> press conference in Paris: “Aid is not being used to save people, but to oppress them.”</p> <p>4 December 1985 <u>MSF France</u> Coordinator in Ethiopia asks the UN representative in Ethiopia to ensure that other agencies continue <u>MSF</u>’s relief work in the camps.</p> <p>7 December 1985 Press conference held by President of <u>MSF France</u> Board of Directors, <u>Rony Brauman</u> in <u>London</u>: testimony of <u>MSF</u> volunteers, appeal for a moratorium on forced transfers.</p> <p>8 December 1985 Press conference given by <u>MSF France</u> volunteers on their return to Paris from Ethiopia.</p> |

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| DEC. 1985 | <p>18 December 1985 The UN representative in Ethiopia declares that MSF France was expelled for interfering in the country's internal affairs.</p> <p>Late December 1985 United States Agency for International Development officially condemns the Ethiopian government policy of deportation.</p> | <p>16 December 1985 The international press reports the defection of Dawit Wolde Georgis to the US. He was the RRC Commissioner.</p> <p>18 December 1985 Declaration from the members of the CRDA (40 NGOs working in Ethiopia) criticising MSF for the bad publicity it has generated for aid agencies in Ethiopia.</p> | <p>12 December 1985 MSF France asks the European Parliament for help in obtaining a moratorium on the forced displacements. The European Parliament criticises the deportation policy and asks the Ethiopian government to allow MSF to resume its activities.</p> <p>18 December 1985 MSF France holds a press conference in Geneva on the dire situation of forced transfers in Ethiopia.</p> <p>19 December 1985 Press conference in Nairobi. MSF France calls for humanitarian organisations in Ethiopia to create a "united front".</p> <p>December 1985 MSF France supplies donors with a document detailing the circumstances of its departure from Ethiopia.</p> |
| 1986 JAN. 1986 | | | <p>January 1986 MSF France takes its campaign against the forced displacements in Ethiopia to the United States and Canada.</p> |

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| JAN. 1986 | <p>21 January 1986 The <u>US government</u> criticises Ethiopia's policy of forced resettlement.</p> | | <p>13 January 1986 <u>MSF Belgium</u> signs an agreement with the <u>Ethiopian government</u> to provide one million dollars worth of medical aid.</p> <p>30 January 1986 The <u>Executive Director of the UN Office for Emergency Operations in Africa</u> rejects MSF France's findings on Ethiopia. The <u>UN representative in Ethiopia</u> says statistics are impossible to obtain.</p> |
| FEB. 1986 | | <p>February 1986 The <u>Ethiopian government</u> announces the temporary suspension of resettlement operations in order to begin a "period of consolidation". Villagisation continues.</p> | |
| MAR. 1986 | | <p>March 1986 Thousands of Ethiopians flee villagisation and seek refuge in Somalia.</p> <p>22 March 1986 <u>Mengistu</u> announces that future transfers will be conducted only on a voluntary basis.</p> | <p>Late March 1986 <u>Claude Malhuret</u>, MSF France's General Director, leaves the organisation to take up the post of <u>Minister for Human Rights</u> in the French right-wing government.</p> |

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| APRIL 1986 | April 1986 The Ethiopian villagisation programme is criticised by diplomats, aid organisations and the international press. | 11 April 1986 Mengistu announces that three million Ethiopians have already been “resettled”. | |
| MAY 1986 | | Early May 1986 The <u>Ethiopian government</u> demands the extradition of <u>Dawit Wolde Georgis</u> , the former head of <u>RRC</u> , and accuses him of diverting funds. | |
| | 21 May 1986 The UN Office for Emergency Operations in Ethiopia launches an appeal to finance the transportation of international aid in <u>Ethiopia</u> . It also issues an optimistic bulletin on the longterm effects of the resettlement programme. | 21 May 1986 <u>Dawit Wolde Georgis</u> tells the press that the famine “arises from a political problem” and criticises his government’s management. | |
| JUNE 1986 | | June 1986 <u>Berhane Deressa</u> , Deputy Commissioner of <u>RRC</u> , defects and criticises his government’s policy. | June 1986 <u>President of MSF France Board of Directors Rony Brauman</u> visits the United States and says that the money raised by <u>Band Aid</u> is being diverted. |
| | | | 17 June 1986 <u>MSF France</u> holds a press conference in Paris. It criticises the diversion of international aid and compares the <u>Ethiopian régime</u> to the <u>Khmer Rouge</u> . |
| | | 20 June 1986 <u>Dawit Wolde Georgis</u> urges the <u>US</u> to continue its aid to <u>Ethiopia</u> . He insists that US ensure that aid is not misappropriated by the government, which he accuses of attempting to establish a Soviet-style regime. | |
| JULY-AUG. 1986 | | | July-August 1986 <u>MSF France</u> continues its campaign against the policy of villagisation. |

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| SEPT. 1986 | | 8 September 1986 The <u>Ethiopian Ambassador to France</u> defects. | |
| OCT. 1986 | | | October 1986 Article by <u>President of MSF France Board of Directors Rony Brauman</u> in the English-language editions of <u>Reader's Digest</u> : "Famine Aid-Were We Duped?" |
| | | 29 October 1986 The Ethiopian Minister for Foreign Affairs defects. | 29 October 1986 Conference entitled "La pitié dangereuse : de l'aide aux victimes à l'aide aux bourreaux" [A Dangerous Compassion: From Aiding the Victims to Aiding Their Executioners] organised by <u>Liberté Sans Frontières</u> . |
| DEC. 1986 | | | December 1986 <u>Rony Brauman's</u> article is reprinted in the French language editions of <u>Reader's Digest</u> : 'Faut-il encore aider l'Ethiopie?' ["Should we Continue to Help Ethiopia?"]. <u>Bob Geldof (Band Aid)</u> accuses <u>MSF</u> of being a political organisation. 15 th anniversary of <u>MSF France's</u> foundation. According to the press, the political quarrels have not damaged its image. |
| 1987 | | Drought returns to Ethiopia. Villagisation has devastated the agricultural system. | <u>MSF France</u> refuses to recant the position it had adopted in 1985 and to guarantee its future silence, conditions imposed by the <u>Ethiopian government</u> for its return to the country. <u>MSF Belgium</u> continues its work in Ethiopia. 28 February 1987 The <u>MSF</u> sections meet in Amsterdam and resume dialogue. |

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| 1989 | | | 3-4 June 1989 The first <u>MSF European Convention</u> is held in Toulouse. |
| 1991 | | The <u>DERG</u> falls. <u>Mengistu</u> flees to Zimbabwe. | |
| 2006 | | An Ethiopian court verdict finds <u>Mengistu</u> guilty, in absentia, of genocide. He is sentenced to life imprisonment. | |
| 2008 | | Following an appeal, <u>Mengistu</u> is sentenced to death, in absentia, by Ethiopia's high court. | |
| 2022 | | May 2022 <u>Zimbabwe</u> hinted that it might consider extraditing him to <u>Ethiopia</u> if Addis Ababa so requested. | |