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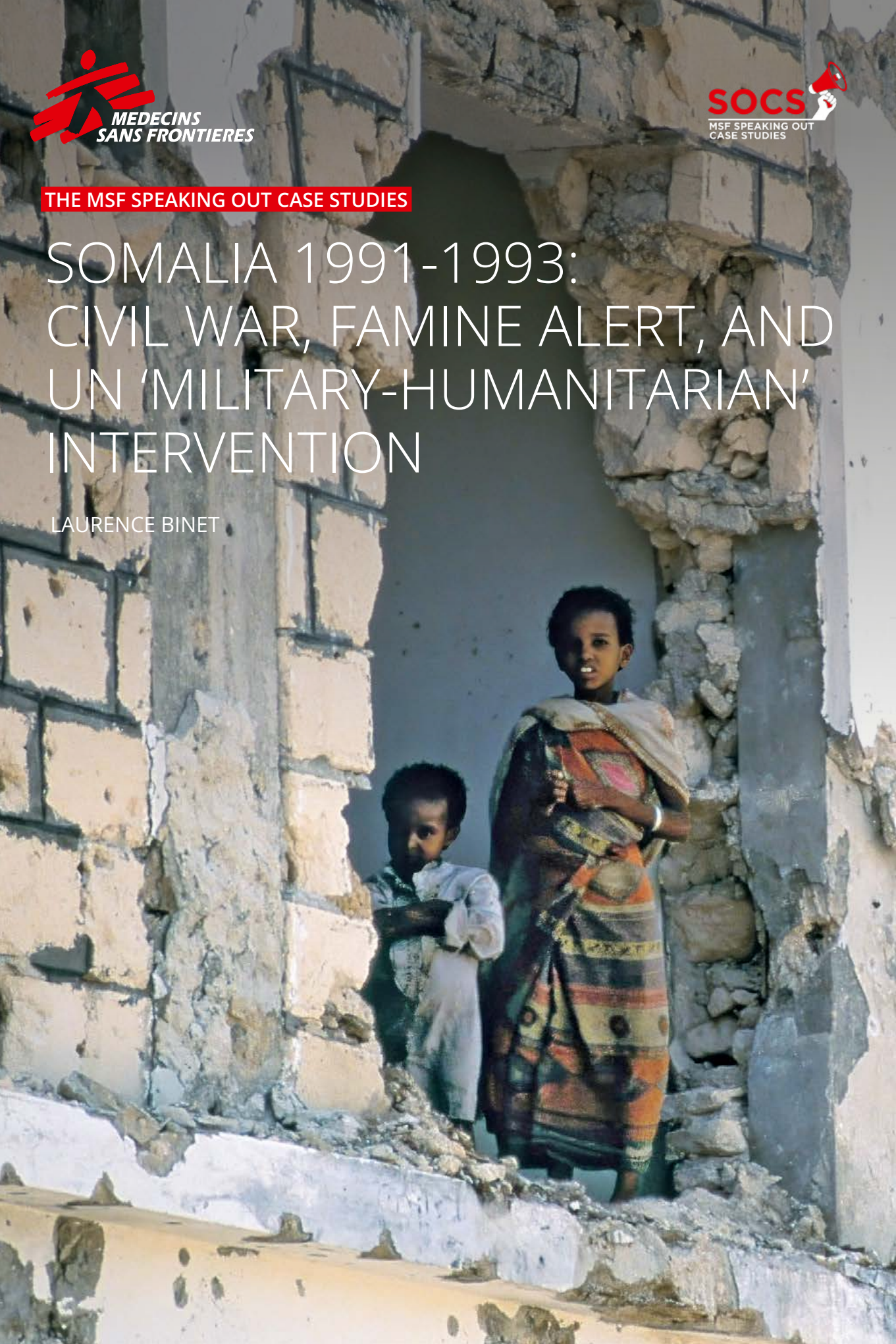
MSF SPEAKING OUT CASE STUDIES

THE MSF SPEAKING OUT CASE STUDIES

SOMALIA 1991-1993: CIVIL WAR, FAMINE ALERT, AND UN 'MILITARY-HUMANITARIAN' INTERVENTION

LAURENCE BINET



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FOREWORD

This publication is part of the 'Médecins Sans Frontières Speaking Out Case Studies' series prepared in response to the MSF International Council's wish to provide the movement with literature on MSF *témoignage* (advocacy).

The idea was to create a reference document that would be straightforward and accessible to all and help staff to understand and adopt the organisation's culture of speaking out.

It was not to be an ideological manual or a set of guidelines. *Témoignage* cannot be reduced to a mechanical application of rules and procedures, as it involves an understanding of the dilemmas inherent in every instance of humanitarian action.

The International Council assigned the project to a director of studies, who in turn works with an editorial committee composed of MSF representatives chosen by the International Board for their experience and expertise. They serve in their capacity as individuals and do not represent their national sections.

Faced with the difficulty of defining the term '*témoignage*', the editorial committee decided to focus the series on case studies in which speaking out posed a dilemma for MSF and thus meant taking a risk.

The main source of information for these studies is MSF's written and oral memory. This is done by researching documents dating from the period in question and by interviewing the protagonists of the events selected.

The individuals interviewed speak in the language they choose. They offer both their account of events and their assessment of MSF's response. The interviews are recorded and transcribed.

Document searches are conducted in the operational sections' archives and, as far as possible, press archives.

The research is constrained by practical and financial issues, including locating interviewees, securing their agreement, and determining the existence, quality and quantity of archived materials.

The main text details events in chronological order. It includes excerpts from documents and interviews, linked by brief introductions and transitional passages. We rely on document extracts to establish the facts as described and perceived by MSF at the time. When documentation is missing, interviews sometimes fill the gaps. These accounts also provide a human perspective on the events and insight into the key players' analyses.

This methodology aims at establishing the facts and setting out a chronological presentation of the positions adopted at the time. It enables the reconstruction of debates and dilemmas without pre-judging the quality of the decisions made.

Preceding the main texts collected, the reader will find a list of abbreviations, a map, and a summary that lays out the context of MSF's public statements and the key dilemmas they sought to address.

In addition, a detailed chronology reconstructs MSF's actions and public statements in regional and international news reports of the period.

Each case study is available in English and in French.

These case studies were essentially designed as an educational tool. Some are now being used as the basis for podcasts and training modules. To reinforce this educational objective, access to all this material is available on the www.msf.org/speakingout website.

We hope you find them useful,

The SOCS Editorial Committee,
2026

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PEOPLE INTERVIEWED AND THEIR POSITION AT THE TIME OF THE EVENTS

(Interviews conducted in 2000 and 2012)

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier
MSF France, Legal Advisor, from 1991

Dr Rony Brauman
MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994

Peter Casaer
MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993

Dr Alain Destexhe
MSF International, General Secretary, 1991-1995

Brigitte Doppler
MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992

Thierry Durand
MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993

Anne Fouchard
MSF France, Communications Officer

Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry
MSF France, Programme Manager in Somalia until February 1992; Deputy Director of Operations, in charge of emergencies from March 1992, in charge of Somalia April-September 1992

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MSF Belgium, Director of Communications

Dr Jacques de Milliano
MSF Holland, General Director 1985-1996

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Wouter van Empelen
MSF Holland, Coordinator in Baidoa, November 1992-February 1993

Dr Brigitte Vasset
MSF France, Director of Operations

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MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993

Dr. [...]
MSF Belgium, Programme Manager

[...]
MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, March-July 1993

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

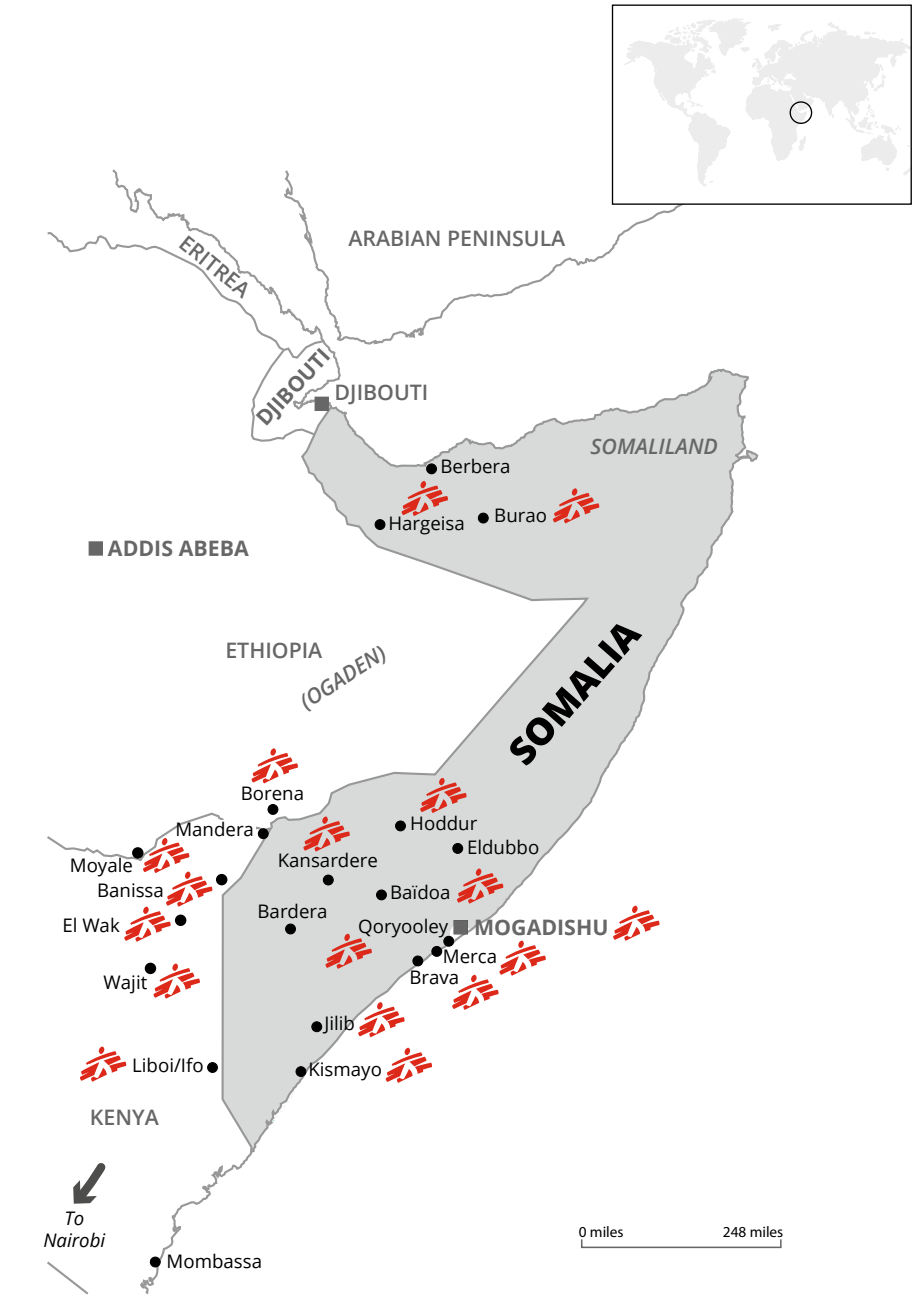
A2	France, Antenne 2 (French public TV network – became France 2 in September 1992)
AFP	Agence France-Presse (French press agency)
AICF / ACF	Action Against Hunger International (Action Internationale Contre la Faim, became Action Against Hunger / Action Contre la Faim in 1996)
ANSA	Somalia, Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (National associated press agency)
AP	USA, Associated Press
BBC	UK, British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	USA, Columbia Broadcasting System
CMOC	United Nations, Civil-Military Operations Centre
CNN	Cable News Network
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DHA	United Nations, Department of Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO	USA, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
ECU	European Currency Unit
EEC	European Economic Community
FAO	United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization
FF	French Francs
GED	German Emergency Doctors / Cap Anamur
HoM	Head of Mission
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMC	International Medical Corps
IPD	Inpatient Department
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MDM	Médecins du Monde
MoH	Somalia, Ministry of Health
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MUAC	Mid Upper-Arm Circumference
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance

OPD	Outpatient Department
PD	Populations in Danger
PH	Public Health
PKO	United Nations, Peacekeeping Operations
PPDA	Patrick Poivre d'Arvor
PSP	Populations in Precarious Situations
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SDM	Somali Democratic Movement
SHS	Somali Shillings
SNF	Somali National Front
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
TFCs	Therapeutic Feeding Centres
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNOSOM I & II	United Nations Operation in Somalia (I & II)
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USC	United Somali Congress
USC / SNA	United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (formed from split of USC)
USC / SSA	United Somali Congress/Somali Salvation Alliance (formed from split of USC)
VRT	Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie (Flemish-speaking Belgian radio-TV network)
WFP	World Food Programme

Extract of document.

Extract of interview.

Click to access the reference material list. Then click on the referring number to access the video.



MSF programmes set up between January 1991 and November 1993

SUMMARY

In December 1990, a state of emergency held sway in Somalia, an East African country devastated by a civil war pitting the forces of President Siad Barre, in power for over 20 years, against several movements of armed opposition, which had slowly but surely gained control of the country. In January 1991, Siad Barre was overthrown and took flight. In August, the civil war flared up again between the supporters of Ali Mahdi Muhammad, the Interim President, and General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, Head of the Armed Forces[1]. The country was further decimated by a drought affecting the entire Horn of Africa. A famine followed, leaving hundreds of thousands of victims in its wake before the deployment of international aid began in August 1992.

The insecurity gave rise to an intervention by the United Nations (UN)'s armed forces (United Nations Operation in Somalia, UNOSOM I), aiming to protect aid convoys and humanitarian workers from looters. The first troops, deployed in September and October 1992, were rapidly replaced by an international force under United States command (Unified Task Force, UNITAF), which landed in Somalia in December 1992, in turn replaced by UN troops (UNOSOM II) in March 1993. The intervention was tarnished by a series of incidents and excessive demonstrations of violence committed by the international 'peacekeeping' troops stationed around Somalia.

In June 1993, following an attack against the Pakistani contingent of the UN peacekeepers, a manhunt was launched against General Aidid. During the months that followed, the fighting escalated: buildings harbouring Aidid's close circle or humanitarian workers were bombed, civilians were killed by the UN forces, and UN soldiers were humiliated, mistreated, or killed.

During the night of 17 and 18 June 1993, the base of the organisation Action Against Hunger International (Action International Contre la Faim, AICF) was bombed. It harboured a Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) team and several journalists at the time. One employee was killed; several others were wounded.

In October 1993, the UN forces, under American command, launched an attack against General Aidid's forces in Mogadishu. It turned into a fiasco, causing many deaths among civilians and UN soldiers. After successive renewals of its mandate, but with no control ever established over a steadily deteriorating situation, the UNOSOM II troops began their definitive withdrawal from Somalia in March 1995.

WHAT DID MSF SEE AND DO?

In December 1990, all United Nations and humanitarian organisation personnel evacuated Somalia and Mogadishu, a capital ravaged by the fighting.

1. Commonly accepted English spelling of Somali names, or Somali spelling, is used in this report where possible. However, these spellings have not always been consistent and variations in the historical documents have been retained in the source extracts.

In January 1991, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) relayed a rebels' call for medical assistance. MSF responded with the dispatch of a team to Mogadishu, composed of different sections' international staff. In the weeks that followed, MSF was the only medical organisation providing assistance to the Somali people, notably through its surgical programmes in Mogadishu's shattered hospitals. As 1991 unfolded, MSF added a programme for reconstructive surgery for the war-wounded to its offer of healthcare.

Given the rising insecurity, the organisation started employing and paying armed guards. These guards were recruited by a businessman close to General Aidid and his clan.

In such a context of warfare, drought, and population displacements, a famine became highly likely, but the general insecurity rendered any evaluation outside Mogadishu impossible. It was only in March 1992 that a team of epidemiologists from Epicentre, an MSF unit dedicated to research and epidemiology, was able to conduct a public health survey in the Merca region. The results showed a nutritional disaster. From June 1992 on, MSF's operational sections rolled out therapeutic nutritional programmes in the worst affected regions of Somalia, focusing on the most severe patients, and leaving mass food distribution to the ICRC and the Somali Red Crescent Society.

In March 1993, the French section of MSF decided to withdraw from Somalia, considering the emergency to be over. Staying would require near-impossible safeguarding against UN excesses at the possible expense of its teams' lives. MSF France closed its programmes in late May, but the section sent a team back on two occasions, in June and October 1993, when the fighting re-erupted with intensity in Mogadishu. In late April 1993, the Dutch section wound down its activities in Baidoa, following a series of security incidents, including an attack on its team carried out by its armed guards. The Belgian section continued its programmes in Kismayo.

WHAT DID MSF SAY?

In early 1991, when all cameras were focused on the Gulf War, which opposed a coalition of western nations against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, MSF went to great lengths to draw attention to the civil war tearing Somalia apart, and its humanitarian consequences. During the initial months of intervention, detailed press releases were issued on a daily basis, while MSF, the only foreign organisation present in Somalia, was one of the rare, and often only, sources of media information on unfolding events.

An epidemiological survey conducted in the region of Merca by Epicentre at MSF's request in March 1992, and released during a press conference in May, aimed to secure mortality figures to demonstrate the severity of the famine, which MSF was sure existed and to which it was planning its response accordingly. In the weeks and months that followed, efforts were boosted in communication, lobbying, and public relations so as to focus sustained attention on the Somali people's fate. MSF called on donor countries and the United Nations for massive deliveries of food aid. When international aid did finally reach Somalia, MSF's bases became reception centres for the world's press.

In September 1992, on the announcement of the Blue Berets being dispatched to protect humanitarian convoys, the presidents of MSF France and MSF Holland publicly stated their doubts about the intervention's relevance and possible effectiveness in securing humanitarian operations in Somalia. Conversely, they feared an increase in insecurity and tensions, which they suggested could be limited by a massive scale-up in aid. Meanwhile, MSF Belgium prepared a press release in support of the intervention, which was never released.

MSF then saw the results of its mortality survey – conducted on the displaced population in Merca alone – extrapolated to the entire Somali population and circulated by senior UN staff, with media uptake. Combined with exaggerated statements on the scale of aid diversion, these distortions of the reality contributed to justifications for the 'military-humanitarian' intervention.

In October 1992, MSF lent public support to Mohamed Sahnoun, the United Nations' Special Representative in Somalia, who preferred diplomatic efforts to military action and who was forced to resign after criticising the ineffectiveness of the UN's humanitarian operations in Somalia. In late November, the leaders of the French section of MSF decided against a public stance on the deployment of a multinational force under the United States' command. However, various interventions in the press by the section's president indicated some opposition to a 'military-humanitarian' intervention, as it was referred to, by those calling it into question. Meanwhile, MSF Belgium declared itself in favour of the intervention, while considering the risks that the operation entailed for humanitarian workers.

In December 1992, the MSF teams in Baidoa and Kismayo denounced the delayed arrival of the multinational troops to the press; these towns were under heavy fire from looters fleeing the capital before the troops' arrival. MSF felt that a timely UN presence could have avoided the chaos. MSF Belgium called for information from the Belgian authorities and their representatives in the United States and Kenya on the UN troops' operational intentions.

In May 1993, MSF Belgium delivered a report to the authorities denouncing excesses and abuses committed by the Belgian paratroopers stationed in Kismayo, as witnessed by MSF teams. In August 1993, the organisation confirmed these facts to the Belgian media, which made the affair public. In June 1993, MSF publicly denounced the excessive use of force by UNOSOM troops and the civilian murders in Mogadishu. In July, MSF denounced the UN forces' bombing of Action Against Hunger International's base, harbouring MSF personnel at the time. Also in August, MSF introduced a complaint "on the violation of humanitarian law in Somalia within the framework of UNOSOM operations" to the United Nations Security Council, the Military High Command and the commanders of the national UN contingents in Somalia. The complaint was held non-admissible by the various UN bodies, but, in the longer term, it led to internal UN reflection and a reform of the peacekeepers' rules of engagement.

In September 1993, the French section's president published a text entitled 'Somalia, the Humanitarian Crime', criticising the excesses and abuses of the international intervention. In the months that followed, MSF justified its withdrawal by raising questions on the UNOSOM troops' practices.

DILEMMAS AND QUESTIONS

Throughout this entire crisis, the dilemmas posed by MSF's operations and public speaking out sparked animated debate within the organisation:

- As the only source of information in the field, how far could MSF go in releasing information to the media without compromising its neutrality by favouring one party to the conflict or another?
- In a context with such major security issues rendering all assistance highly risky, should MSF employ armed guards at the risk of adding to the climate of violence? Should we content ourselves with employing armed guards associated with one party to the conflict alone, at the risk of damaging the organisation's image of neutrality and thus potentially placing our teams in danger?
- Having called for the international community to take action, what could MSF do and say when this action came about in the form of a military intervention aiming to protect humanitarian aid convoys, raising fears within MSF that, on the contrary, it would only worsen the insecurity? Should we question this intervention when it had the widespread support of the population being assisted?
- Likewise, how should MSF react when the results of its mortality survey – limited to the displaced in the Merca region alone – were extrapolated to the entire Somali population by senior UN officials, with media uptake?
- Should MSF keep programmes running when the emergency is over so as to react swiftly if the situation deteriorates again, at the risk of endangering its teams and condoning the excesses and abuses of an international 'military-humanitarian' intervention?

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SOMALIA 1991-1993: CIVIL WAR, FAMINE ALERT, AND UN 'MILITARY-HUMANITARIAN' INTERVENTION

In 1949, Somalia was placed under Italian control as a United Nations (UN) trustee territory or 'protectorate'. Somalia gained independence in 1960, merging with Somaliland, which had until then been a British colony. Democratic institutions were established, including elections, according to universal suffrage and respect for civil liberties. Until 1967, the powers were divided fairly evenly between the different clans that made up society.

In 1969, Mohamed Siad Barre, a former police colonel, seized power in a coup. He imposed a one-party system under the Revolutionary Socialist Party, thus favouring his own clan, the Marehan, over others.

From 1979, several Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) sections worked continually in Somalia.

Between 1979 and mid-1982, MSF France provided assistance to refugees who moved into the Hiran region in central Somalia and Gedo in the southwest, from the Ogaden, a settlement area in eastern Ethiopia.[2]

From 1985 to 1987, MSF France's teams worked in and around Hargeisa in Somaliland, a semi-autonomous region in the north of Somalia, supporting Ethiopian refugees fleeing forced relocation imposed by the Mengistu regime. In January 1987, ten international staff were taken hostage and held for ten days in Tug Wajale, on the Ethiopian border.

MSF Holland developed medical programmes in the northwest of the country between 1986 and 1988.

In May 1988, the rebel Somali National Movement (SNM), which had been resisting the regime since 1985 in the north, launched an offensive on the cities of Hargeisa and Burao. The battle with the government forces ended in the near destruction of these cities and the exodus of hundreds of thousands of refugees into Ethiopia, while fighting persisted in the north.

In January 1989, after six months of waiting in Mogadishu, an MSF Holland team resumed activities in a 120-bed hospital in Borama, on the Ethiopian border. These were interrupted again in April 1990, after the armed robbery of one of the team's

2. Since the creation of the Somali Republic in 1960, Somali leaders have laid claim to the Ogaden, a region equally claimed by Ethiopia, and populated by Somalis. The first, limited, conflict against Ethiopia lasted from October 1963 until February 1964. In July 1977, the Somali army invaded the Ogaden, but in May 1978, thanks to the intervention of Cuban troops, Ethiopia was victorious and held on to sovereignty over the Ogaden.

vehicles. In the meantime, this MSF section revived a local clinic and built health centres in villages around Alei Badei.
In 1989, the rebels of the United Somali Congress (USC) from the Hawiye clan began their underground resistance in central and southern Somalia.
The country was in a state of near civil war and its economy devastated.[3]
In May 1990, a group of 114 clan leaders, including politicians, religious leaders, and businessmen, published the *Mogadishu Manifesto*, which condemned the actions of the Siad Barre regime and demanded the opening of dialogue on policy reform.
Its back against the wall, the government adopted a draft constitution incorporating a multi-party system for submission to parliament and to referendum. In July, elections were called for February 1991.
During the summer, there were several attacks and roadside bombings against the structures of the regime and also against foreign nationals – especially Americans and Italians – who were increasingly departing the country because of the lack of safety.
In October, the opposition parties agreed to bring down the government by force. Demonstrations calling for the release of political prisoners were violently repressed.
In December 1990, the SNM rebels controlled the north, while the USC were gaining ground in the centre. President Siad Barre declared a state of emergency. The UN office closed and all UN humanitarian personnel were evacuated from Mogadishu.
The majority of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also left the capital. Some relief operations continued in the north, conducted by organisations such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the ICRC, CARE, and Save the Children Fund (SCF).
By the end of December 1990, the city of Mogadishu was paralysed. In some central and northern parts of the capital there were no more markets, fuel, electricity, or water.

'The Worsening of the Civil War in Somalia – Surrounded by the Rebels, in the Throes of Economic Crisis and Growing Insecurity, the Capital, Mogadishu, Tries to Survive…', ***Le Monde*** (France), Jean Hélène, 26 December 1990 (in French).

Extract:
In some neighbourhoods, such as Kaaraan, there has been no running water for two years: water carriers have taken over. Outside service stations, huge queues of vehicles have been waiting since the middle of the night for the improbability of fuel, which is more likely to be found with confidence on the black market. There is nothing new in this. "All these shortages have been a daily part of life in Mogadishu for years," admits a retired Italian. "But what we cannot tolerate", he adds, "is the economic crisis and insecurity".
All Mogadishu residents, petty criminals and honest men alike, are armed. Soldiers seeking to bolster their meagre wages are largely fuelling semi-clandestine trafficking. No day goes by without an assault, a murder, a robbery. Night falls and everyone barricades themselves in. […]
All-terrain vehicles, especially those belonging to humanitarian organisations, have captured the full attention of car thieves. […] More than 200 Americans and UN workers have packed up, reducing tens or even hundreds of Somalis to unemployment. For the

3. In 1990, Somalia's GDP was less than US$280 per person.

Italians, the departure bell has not yet rung. The EEC [European Economic Community] judges against a hasty withdrawal from the country because, as it explains, it is the people, hit hard by the crisis, who will be the first to suffer the consequences.
The capital today – in part blockaded because the road to the north is cut off – is still connected to the south by road (though less and less safe) to Kismayo. It still manages to supply itself thanks to the farming in the nearby countryside bordering the River Shabelle, and thanks to the port, is the entry point for all imports. [...]
Inflation is now estimated at 250% per annum. The decrease in foreign assistance (American aid was completely withdrawn for all of 1991) and the cost of maintaining an army on a war footing weighs heavily on public finances. Unemployment and poverty have reached alarming proportions with the arrival of thousands of displaced people fleeing the combat zones. "It is no longer possible to go forward with free distribution of food," says a social worker who prefers to remain anonymous, "because it always leads to riots, sometimes deadly". The city is threatened with anarchy. President Siad Barre's grim prediction.

I. BEHIND CLOSED DOORS IN THE SOMALI WAR

At the end of 1990, the USC demanded medical assistance from the ICRC which the Swiss organisation was not able to provide. ICRC senior management approached MSF to respond to the demand and provide assistance. Negotiations began between the various parties in Mogadishu and Nairobi to ensure the security of the humanitarian teams.
MSF Belgium decided to intervene in Somalia and proposed to MSF France to do so jointly.
On 2 January 1991 – the day the Gulf War[4] started – an intersectional crisis meeting was held in Paris. The plan was to send two surgical teams to support existing hospital structures in Mogadishu and assess the situation of people displaced by the conflict. It would be an 'MSF Europe' mission, composed of personnel from MSF Belgium, MSF France and MSF Holland, under MSF Belgium coordination.
Little recent information was available, and no one seemed to know the exact situation in Mogadishu, not even the representatives of the USC in London and Rome, nor the Italian authorities, whose embassy was the last to remain open in Mogadishu.

A. INTO THE ENCLAVE OF MOGADISHU

On 6 January 1991, after two days of travel punctuated by many obstacles preventing landing, a team of seven international staff from MSF's Belgian and French sections finally arrived in Mogadishu and set up in the general hospital located in the government zone, with the basic medical equipment for mounting a surgical unit.

4. In 1990 and 1991, the Gulf War saw Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces opposed by a coalition of 34 states, backed by the UN.

A flurry of press releases, sometimes doubling up in their release by the Belgian and French sections, related all the episodes of this operation. The aim was to highlight a situation neglected by an international community, which had been totally captivated for several months by the preparation and launching of the Gulf War.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Charters a Plane to Somalia', **Press Release**, MSF France, Paris, 4 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
While fighting between government forces and armed opposition movements rages in Somalia, Médecins Sans Frontières has decided to charter a plane to Mogadishu. The Médecins Sans Frontières Boeing 707 will take off from Belgium tonight carrying a surgical team of 12 people, medicines, and relief supplies (surgical and first aid kits, all-terrain vehicles, tents, blankets, water tanks...). It is expected to reach the Somali capital on 5 January at dawn. To ensure the safety of its staff and enable them to effect humanitarian assistance for civilian victims of the fighting, Médecins Sans Frontières has contacted the parties to the conflict in the capital in order to obtain a ceasefire to get its equipment and teams into the Mogadishu hospital. According to the information available to Médecins Sans Frontières there are likely to be many people with injuries in the Somali capital, where the hospitals lack the equipment and materials required for their care.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Plane has not Received Permission to Land at Mogadishu', Somalia **Press Release** No. 2, MSF France, 5 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
The Médecins Sans Frontières plane which left Ostende in Belgium this morning at 2 am with 18 tonnes of equipment (first aid and surgical) and 14 people on board has not received permission to land in Mogadishu. It was diverted to Mombasa in Kenya. The Médecins Sans Frontières team will make a fresh attempt tomorrow to land at the Mogadishu airport and provide assistance to the civilian population, which has been heavily affected by fighting between government troops and those of the USC.

'Part of the Médecins Sans Frontières Team has left Mombasa for Mogadishu', **Press Release**, MSF France, Paris, 6 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
An Italian aircraft involved in the repatriation of Italian nationals to Italy has agreed to take on board some of the Médecins Sans Frontières team members as well as two all-terrain vehicles and medical and surgical equipment. It left Mombasa (Kenya) in the morning and will arrive at the Mogadishu airport at 2 pm (Paris time). Médecins Sans Frontières reiterates its call for a ceasefire between the warring parties (USC and government forces) to allow the team to reach the hospital in Mogadishu in its clearly identifiable vehicles.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Unable to Reach Mogadishu', MSF Somalia **Press Release** No. 4, MSF France, Paris, 6 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
The Italian aircraft flying under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross had to turn back for safety reasons. It had been agreed to carry a part of the Médecins Sans Frontières team and its medico-surgical equipment to Mogadishu. The tension which reigns in the Somali capital makes it currently impossible to land any aircraft at the airport. Médecins Sans Frontières is renewing its efforts by all possible means to enable its staff to carry out their humanitarian assistance mission to civilian victims in Mogadishu. The team stands ready to re-depart for Somalia.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Arrived in Mogadishu', MSF Somalia **Press Release** No. 5, MSF France, Paris, 7 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
The Italian aircraft flying under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross has landed at Mogadishu, carrying a Médecins Sans Frontières team of seven, two clearly identifiable all-terrain vehicles, and medico-surgical equipment. The Médecins Sans Frontières team now has to reach the hospital in the Somali capital. This weekend, the Médecins Sans Frontières team attempted twice, without success, to land in Mogadishu, where fighting still rages. Médecins Sans Frontières reiterates its call for a ceasefire between the warring parties (USC and government forces) so as to allow its team to reach the hospital in Mogadishu on board its clearly identifiable vehicles.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Team in Mogadishu', MSF Somalia **Press Release** No. 6, MSF France, Paris, 8 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
The Médecins Sans Frontières surgical team began its humanitarian assistance mission in Mogadishu, Somalia, this morning. According to information relayed by the Italian Embassy in Mogadishu, the seven Médecins Sans Frontières workers (surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, doctors, and logisticians) have reached the Somali capital hospital today. The team landed at Mogadishu airport during the day yesterday on board an Italian aircraft flying under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. It was able to leave the airport zone quite quickly. Médecins Sans Frontières, the only humanitarian organisation now present in the Somali capital, asks the different armed groups to respect its neutrality in the conflict so as to allow the team to carry out its mission and for the wounded to be transferred to hospital. The organisation is also trying to reinforce its team and bring more material into Mogadishu.

'Fighting Intensifies in Mogadishu as Residents Try to Join Airlift', ***The Guardian*** (UK), Peter Biles, Nairobi, 8 January 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Scenes of panic were reported at Mogadishu airport yesterday as terrified residents attempted to flee from the fighting, and the situation in the Somali capital deteriorated still further.

Earlier, two Italian air force transport planes had landed in Mogadishu to fly out another 250 people from the city where rebels of the United Somali Congress are trying to dislodge President Siad Barre.
The aircraft remained on the ground for only fifteen minutes. Those at the airport reported no fighting nearby, but said they had heard gunfire in the centre of town. One man said it was still possible to travel around Mogadishu by car, but "very dangerous".
"There was real panic when the aircraft arrived," said Thierry Durand, the Nairobi representative of the charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), which yesterday sent a medical team to Mogadishu. "Everybody wanted to climb on board the planes and escape the fighting," he added.
Many of those trying to force their way on to the aircraft were local Somalis.
A few hours earlier, nine officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross and 12 Somali Red Crescent workers left by boat and were taken aboard the French warship, *Jules Verne*, off the Somali coast.
"The ICRC team was unable to pursue its operation in Mogadishu as marauding combatants had stolen most of their vehicles at gunpoint and as relief goods and the delegates' personal property had been looted," said an ICRC statement from Geneva.
"The team could not proceed to Mogadishu airport due to intensive fighting in the area on Sunday, and under the circumstances it was decided to evacuate."

The mayhem in and around Mogadishu really started in December 1990. At the time, within MSF, it had become a regular practice – we didn't know what was happening on the ground but we sent full charters, without knowing if we had the authorisation, if we could land, etc. So this full charter was prepared, with a team to go as well. I told them that the plane would never land in Mogadishu because there was war in the city and the embassies were being evacuated. I had contacts with the diplomatic service in Italy in particular, and they were saying that no civilian plane was going to land in Mogadishu. But it didn't matter what I said; they sent the charter anyway! It wasn't a botched landing, the pilot didn't even try to land in Mogadishu, he landed in Mombasa. Then they wanted to have the plane land in Nairobi because they thought they could make their way somehow from Nairobi. […] I said, 'No way.' Evacuations of foreign nationals were being conducted out of Mombasa, mostly using Italian army Hercules. So I said, 'If we have the chance to put some of the cargo and a part of the team onto a plane, it is going to be out of Mombasa.' So we sent an international team of Dutch, Belgians and French to Mombasa. The Italian Embassy agreed to take four or six MSF people and some of the material in its Hercules at our own risk and deposit it all while they were evacuating their nationals.

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

We were trying to get funds released, including for ourselves because we worked a lot with the emergency assistance fund of the European Union – which had just been baptised ECHO [European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office]. The problem was that in the eyes of the Commission, a situation of 'emergency' could only be declared by the government. So either you recognised that there was a state – but in our case it was the state that was the cause of the problem – or you believed that a state no longer existed, which meant that you couldn't release anything. Moreover, the fiction of a state led by Siad Barre still prevailed. Our first efforts focused on highlighting the inappropriate – ridiculous – aspect of this diplomatic-bureaucratic approach, and trying to rally others to the cause … It was not such

a significant moment, it was simply the first instance of communication because we found this disparity between the situation and the international response ridiculous. We wanted at the least more money, and a greater presence. I must say that MSF had ended up swimming against the tide of all those NGOs, UN, and diplomats who had evacuated from Somalia because of the danger. So our concern was to put Somalia on the international agenda at a level that was more consistent with the situation. This concern was not necessarily very well-articulated in practice, but it was very present in our minds and in our discussions. It had been four months so far of the rampant fascination with the huge military deployment on the borders of Iraq that carried everything in its wake. I must say that it was an impressive sight. So to put Somalia into the picture was attempting the impossible. We didn't quite get there, but it wasn't a total failure either. I'm not saying that there was a cause-and-effect relationship between our wishes and the actual presence of Somalia in the media, but among journalists there were, say, 'reasonable' people who didn't necessarily just do their job self-servingly based on the CNN [Cable News Network] headlines. There were, despite it all, some interesting reports at the time.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 8 January 1991, Belgian and French media reported that "according to the MSF team", government forces still controlled the Somali capital. As a result, the personnel were reminded that they should not comment on the status of the parties involved in the fighting.

'Siad Barre Clings on in Mogadishu', ***Libération*** (France), Stephen Smith, 9 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Two days after the beginning of the armed insurgency in Mogadishu, the Somali capital remains essentially under the control of forces loyal to President Siad Barre. In particular they occupy Villa Somalia, the seat of power in the city centre, as well as all the oceanfront, from the port to the airport.
This can be summarised by the account of seven members of the humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the first neutral observers to have arrived in the Somali capital.
Their description of the situation on the ground reported yesterday contrasts with that accredited by the rebels. According to the political leadership of the United Somali Congress, Barre is holed up in an underground bunker at the airport, surrounded by insurgents, who have launched a final assault.
The testimony of the Franco-Belgian medical team is supported by diplomatic sources.

MSF France Somalia **Sitrep** No. 2, 9 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Information disseminated by Reuters Belgium (and relayed by *Libération*) on Wednesday cites an MSF source for the comment on the forces in Mogadishu, which causes us a

problem, especially vis-à-vis the USC, "According to the Médecins Sans Frontières team on the ground, forces loyal to the president continue to control most of Mogadishu. An account that contrasts with the rebel version." MSF is not there to play war reporter, so everyone is asked to be careful with the information that they give to the press, and to be satisfied simply talking about the situation on a medical basis, not about the fighting.

On 9 January 1991, MSF made an official appeal to the warring parties for a half-day ceasefire so that its team could get from the airport to the hospital with supplies.

'Médecins Sans Frontières in Somalia: Injured Flock to Mogadishu Hospital', **Press Release** No. 8, MSF France, Paris, 10 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
According to the Médecins Sans Frontières team in Somalia, the wounded are flocking to Mogadishu hospital. The seven members of Médecins Sans Frontières (surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, doctors, and logisticians) have been working for three days, in collaboration with Somali, Indian, and Italian medical staff in the hospital they have re-opened in the capital. The appeal launched yesterday by Médecins Sans Frontières, now the only humanitarian organisation present in the Somali capital, asks the various armed groups to respect its neutrality in the conflict and to facilitate access to the hospital to allow the wounded to receive care. The organisation is also trying to ship more material (anaesthesia and resuscitation kits) and an additional team, positioned in Mombasa, to Mogadishu. To support the Médecins Sans Frontières intervention in Somalia, you can send your donations to Médecins Sans Frontières, CCP [postal giro account] 4060 U Paris, or by Minitel: 36 15 code MSF.

'**Telephone Contact** with the Team in Mogadishu, Thursday 10/01 at 10 am', Summary, MSF France, 10 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Internal circulation of message from Somalia desk, MSF France, to Georges [Dallemagne], Director of Operations, MSF Belgium.
Embassy of Italy has not made the decision to evacuate.
++ Fighting around the embassy and a little around the hospital. No convoy planned for the moment to the hospital. [...] According to the embassy, the government still holds three areas:
- Airport
- Villa Somalia
- Hotel Juba
The pale greens (USC) have allowed a water delivery through to the [Italian] embassy.
The team worked until 1 am. They want to stay as long as the embassy does not evacuate and they are happy with this decision. We have informed them of our contact with the USC.
BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] Somalia has announced the arrival of 100 Italian soldiers to protect the embassy.

'**Summary** of Conversation with Mogadishu, Thursday 10/01/1991 – 11 am', MSF Belgium, 10 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Situation at the hospital: People have learned via the BBC that we are in the hospital. The wounded flood in, the military also, which is causing problems... There is no obvious coordination between the MSF surgeon and the Somali surgeon. The team is going to be short of materials and it will soon need reinforcements of personnel and materials.
Situation in the city:
Nutritional problems: lack of water and food, reasonably significant risk of cholera.
The USC is gaining ground but the hospital is still in government territory.
It needs to be broadcast that the wounded are flocking to the hospital, the hospital will run out of material, and that a supply convoy must be allowed through.

On 12 January 1991, as fighting intensified in the city and the frontline moved closer to the general hospital, the Italian Embassy evacuated the last foreign nationals present within its walls and closed. The MSF team remained as the only group of foreigners in Mogadishu. A plane chartered by MSF landed in Mogadishu, discharged its cargo of materials and equipment and took off immediately.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Stays in Mogadishu', Somalia **Press Release** No. 10, MSF France, Paris, 12 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
While the fighting continues to rage, the Médecins Sans Frontières team has decided to stay in Mogadishu's hospital to provide assistance to the many wounded civilians who have flooded in. The association has managed today, Saturday 12 January, to fly in medical-surgical equipment and a replacement team. With the last foreign nationals able to evacuate today thanks to a ceasefire that was barely upheld, and the Italian Embassy closed, Médecins Sans Frontières remains the only foreign representation in Mogadishu. Médecins Sans Frontières reiterates its urgent call to find more surgeons and anaesthetists so as to open another surgical service in Mogadishu.

On 13 January 1991, an MSF team went into the USC-controlled zone for the first time to assess the situation. During its return, the ceasefire was broken and the driver was wounded by gunfire. Once again, the team's actions were all reported in a series of press releases issued by each of the sections.
The USC estimated that 2,000 people had been killed and 4,000 injured since the beginning of the battle for Mogadishu.

'Emergency Aid in Somalia – Médecins Sans Frontières Team Fired Upon as it Crosses the Frontline', MSF Belgium **Press Release** No. 6, Brussels, 14 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Two members of the Médecins Sans Frontières team crossed the frontline to assess the situation. The SOS [Children's Villages] Hospital receives 150 wounded per day and the Somali doctors who work there report extremely high mortality figures (30 deaths per day). The team was fired upon on its return to the central hospital, despite the fact that its car is clearly recognisable. The driver was wounded in the thigh and two members of the team were hit by shrapnel in their hands. Médecins Sans Frontières once again calls on all parties to respect the organisation's neutrality.
There is still fighting around the central hospital where the MSF surgical team works. Hundreds of injured are received daily. Some die on arrival at the hospital. Médecins Sans Frontières is sending a Cessna 404 to Mogadishu again today, to supply and reinforce the team with an additional two people. Dispatch of a C-130 [Hercules] containing medical and logistical equipment is scheduled for Tuesday, 15 January. A cargo ship carrying a medico-surgical team and logistics and medical equipment will leave within the coming 24 hours from Mombasa (Kenya) for Uarsciek in the area controlled by the rebels, ±70 km north of Mogadishu.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Working on Both Sides of the Front', **Press Release** No. 13, MSF France, 14 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
A new Médecins Sans Frontières team is now operating in a Mogadishu hospital in the part of the city held by the USC rebels. A week ago, another team re-opened another hospital in the heart of the Somali capital, in an area under government control. Another aircraft chartered by Médecins Sans Frontières takes off today from Mombasa (Kenya) for Mogadishu airport. It is carrying surgical material and a new team. The security of movements from one zone to another in the city is still very precarious. Médecins Sans Frontières reiterates its call for the belligerents to respect the neutrality of our teams, the civilian hospitals, and our teams' vehicles, clearly identifiable, which make their way through the city to rescue the wounded.

'Update on Médecins Sans Frontières' Emergency Response in Mogadishu', **Press Release** No. 14, MSF France, 14 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Since December 1990, fighting has pitched Somali government forces under President Siad Barre against the rebel troops of the USC and the SNM. In early January, the fighting became very violent in the capital, Mogadishu. On 4 January, Médecins Sans Frontières (the Belgian and French sections) chartered a plane to Somalia. The Boeing 707, carrying a medico-surgical team of 12 people and 18 tonnes of equipment (two all-terrain vehicles, surgical and first-aid kits, water tanks, and tents), could not land in Mogadishu and landed instead in Mombasa (Kenya) on the morning of 5 January.
The next day (6 January), a part of the team (seven persons) had to turn back after another attempted landing on board an Italian plane flying under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Italian aircraft, used to evacuate foreign

nationals who had taken refuge in the Italian Embassy, was finally able to land in Mogadishu in the morning of 7 January. It carried seven Médecins Sans Frontières team members and two all-terrain vehicles full of supplies. A ceasefire by the parties to the conflict was called for, backed by international radio stations broadcasting in the Somali capital, to allow the transfer of supplies and teams from the airport to the hospital in Mogadishu.

The only foreign representation still in the Somali capital was the Italian representative. The Médecins Sans Frontières team reached Mogadishu hospital, which was able to re-open its doors. The team worked with four Somali surgeons and Indian and Italian nurses, who operated on 25 patients wounded by bullets in the first day. The announcement of the reopening of the hospital caused a significant influx of casualties that were able to reach the hospital due to calls for a truce and to respect the neutrality of the humanitarian mission of Médecins Sans Frontières. The pace of arrivals to the emergency department was at the time 30 to 50 people per day.

On 11 January, when the team announced that it may run out of surgical materials (including resuscitation supplies), Médecins Sans Frontières sought to charter a plane to Mogadishu. But heavy fighting in the capital, especially in the vicinity of the airport and the Italian Embassy (located near the residence where President Barre resides) prevented the landing of any aircraft. On Saturday, 12 January, the Italian Embassy evacuated the last Italian nationals who took refuge within its walls.

Médecins Sans Frontières sent a plane from Mombasa with two people to relieve a part of the team (an anaesthesiologist and a logistician) and emergency medical supplies. On Sunday, 13 January, contacts were made with the USC in order to send an exploratory mission into areas held by the rebels. The USC reports 150 injuries per day in the areas of the capital under its control. On the morning of Monday, 14 January, a fresh aircraft chartered by Médecins Sans Frontières carrying four people and one tonne of extra material took off from Mombasa for Mogadishu.

'Summary of **Telephone Conversation** with Bruno [Corbé] and Dominique [Boutriau], Moga[dishu] – 14/1/1991', MSF Belgium, Mogadishu, 14 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:

Politico-military situation: it shifts a lot. Military build-up. The front is getting closer to the airport and hospital. MSF no longer steps outside the hospital. The hospital is so disorganised (no records) that it is impossible to know the number of casualties since MSF is present, but it is believed 14 to 15 injured people arrive per day on average. [...]

Information

On-site: following the accident yesterday, the governmental authorities have requested that MSF pre-alert them of all of its movements in the city. Then once on the other side of the frontline, MSF has to make arrangements with the other side...! Brussels and Paris are against crossing the frontline anew. In Europe: Paris prefers not to report the incident. Brussels asks Dominique whether a message should be transmitted to the BBC? Dominique believes it should be, that [the BBC] is the only voice heard on both sides. She is sending a statement to Brussels to forward to the BBC to ensure the security of the teams.

'Correction: None Wounded among the Médecins Sans Frontières Team in Mogadishu', **Press release** No. 16, MSF France, 15 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières wishes to correct information currently circulating which is causing concern for the families of the Médecins Sans Frontières team in Mogadishu (Somalia). On 13 January, when part of a Médecins Sans Frontières team was returning from an exploratory mission on the USC rebel side of the frontline, their vehicle, clearly identifiable with stickers and flags, received two gunfire hits. The driver was lightly wounded and the team suffered light scratches and is [otherwise] unscathed.
Médecins Sans Frontières asks the parties to the conflict again to allow its teams to conduct their humanitarian mission in Somalia with complete neutrality, for all the civilian population of the capital, and to be able to travel in Mogadishu completely freely, and to let the wounded reach the hospitals where the organisation is working.

On 16 January 1991, with the general hospital still in the heart of the fighting, the wounded no longer had access and the humanitarian mission's minimum-security conditions were no longer guaranteed. The team of MSF international staff evacuated to Mombasa. When they arrived in Kenya, they spoke out about the situation to the international press, which wasn't present in Mogadishu and for which MSF represented one of few sources of information from inside Somalia.

'The Médecins Sans Frontières Team Leaves Mogadishu', **Press Release** No. 17, MSF France, 16 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
With the frontline shifted and Mogadishu's general hospital now in the heart of the fighting in the Somali capital, the Médecins Sans Frontières team, which has been working in the hospital for more than a week, has left Mogadishu. Since yesterday, Médecins Sans Frontières' teams received few wounded, these last few having faced the impossibility of crossing the frontline to get to the hospital. Meanwhile, the members of Médecins Sans Frontières, the sole foreign representatives still present in Somalia since Sunday, 13 January, could no longer rely on even the minimum necessary guarantees for their humanitarian mission. Yesterday, armed men, some in uniform, penetrated the hospital, made threats, and stole a vehicle and some material items (medicines and communication tools), indispensable for the work of the organisation. The teams have regrouped in Mombasa (in Kenya), where they will try to resume their activities in Somalia under working conditions commensurate with their humanitarian mission.

'The Murderous Battle of Mogadishu Plays Out, Unobserved', ***Libération*** (France), Stephen Smith, 18 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Bruno Corbé didn't hesitate for long; hunted down by four government soldiers grasping weapons, he handed them the keys to the car. "They got excited very quickly when I refused at first. One of them clicked his weapon and pointed it at me: it was serious. So I handed over one of our cars." This was Monday. On Tuesday, Médecins Sans Frontières

didn't even wait for the soldiers to jump over the walls to once more penetrate Mogadishu's general hospital. When the armed men arrived to commandeer them he immediately handed over the keys of the other two vehicles. "We knew that it wasn't possible [to hold on any longer]," continues Dominique Boutriau, Coordinator of the team. "No more cars, our stocks of medicine exhausted, the threats and menacing are growing in intensity and scaring off the hospital staff, en masse." On Wednesday, MSF evacuated provisionally from the capital where, from now on, nearly three weeks after the armed insurrection started, no neutral presence remains.

Twenty days after the start of the hostilities, the diplomats have all left, the journalists have never come. Without precedent in the history of armed conflicts, even on the most remote continent, the battle of Mogadishu is playing out behind closed doors, without witnesses. The country is broken up into five fiefs belonging to different rebel movements, without speaking of the "armed gangs". Often a whole clan redeploys itself into the organised crime of highway robbery. Which makes it impossible to access the Somali capital by road. Meanwhile Mogadishu's international airport is still held by troops loyal to the President, Siad Barre. At the airport they demand an arrival visa that no foreign representation is prepared to issue…

The testimonies of the evacuees from Mogadishu could not be more precious. For 11 days, the MSF team – four French nationals, three Belgians, and two Dutch – worked in the city's general hospital, in a zone controlled for the whole time by the regular army. "It's a hospital with around 300 beds which, when we arrived, was two-thirds full. The hospital staff had stayed but without the necessary resources, they had to improvise. As an example, for the patients with bullet wounds who had fractures – the splints were created with cardboard," recounts Alain Ledoux, the surgeon in the team. He was never short of work. As soon as word had spread of MSF's arrival, around 50 people with severe wounds, most of them civilians, were brought in each day. "Many of them had waited more than a week to be treated, some 20 days," notes anaesthetist Catherine Thomas. "Eventually the frontline got so close to the hospital that it was impossible to bring in patients because of the fighting. It's also one of the reasons for us leaving!" Incapable of delivering their assistance to the population, the Italian church workers from the hospital also withdrew with MSF for Mombasa in neighbouring Kenya.

So where does the toll of the fighting stand? No reliable figure can be offered. Dominique Boutriau and logistician Pierre-Marie Sarant, who had travelled around the city, only saw half a dozen or so dead bodies with their own eyes. "But we took the small, untarred backstreets to keep away from the fighting." The MSF car was still sniped at. Crossing an intersection on the way back from the rebel side the vehicle suffered two hits, one of which wounded Pierre-Marie Sarant in the arm. The most astonishing element of this is that the 'legitimate' government of Siad Barre, still in place, had authorised MSF to make contact with the insurgents of the United Somali Congress (USC). The prime minister himself had offered an escort up to the demarcation line between the government zone and the northeast of Mogadishu, which has passed into the hands of the rebels – an offer declined by the managers of the MSF team, which had got themselves to the other side alone. "We were well received. The rebels asked us to launch an emergency appeal for international aid. Evidently they have little contact with the outside world," explains Dominique Boutriau. There she met the military chief of the USC, General Mohamed Nur Galal.

The Somali doctors and nurses on the rebel side have organised themselves so that the "South Hospital" is working, where they receive some 150 seriously wounded patients per day. "They're doing tremendous work in very difficult circumstances," says Pierre-Marie Sarant. They have established medical outposts in each of the neighbourhoods held by the USC. Only the most serious cases are brought to the hospital, where around

30 people die on a daily basis. Based on the information gathered from the two sides, MSF assesses the number of wounded in Mogadishu to be "several thousand." "What's called the frontline is in fact very fluid," explains Bruno Corbé. "In the evening, from the roof of the hospital, you can judge the actual progress of the rebels according to which neighbourhoods are lit. After the fighting, there is no electricity…" Overall, the destruction due to heavy artillery is not so significant. "But there are looters. In areas abandoned by its residents, they clean them out. It's a real hive of activity. The first of the looters carry a fridge or a television on their heads, pushing a sofa or a chair in front of them. The latecomers even rip out the frame of the doors and windows…" The MSF team will attempt to return to Mogadishu however they can. There are the wounded [to treat] but there is also, increasingly, hunger. "In the hospital, they ate weevily rice. There was nothing other than that. The civilians who have not yet fled the city need help." Will the ceasefire announced by the government allow them back in? Yesterday it was too early to know. "But if necessary we will return to the rebel side," state the MSF officials. "All that we ask for is the minimum security necessary to provide relief to the population."

Siad Barre is still in power and we have managed to set ourselves up in the Digfer hospital, not very far from the neighbourhood where he is living. Bit by bit the tension around the neighbourhood is tightening and it is getting harder and harder for the team to make it to the hospital. At any given moment they are fired on from above. One of them is struck and is wounded in the hand. They decide to evacuate, but it's just not possible any more.

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

This cleaving of the country, this foetid clan war, it was something we were learning more about. Up until the present we had been relatively protected from this chaos. Even when we were working within the conflicts in the interior of the country, the clans were better organised, respect for humanitarian action was more evident, there was still [humanitarian] space. Then we quickly realised that we were going to struggle and that finding our place was getting difficult. I think that the to-and-froing of our teams reflects this difficulty perfectly, to land and to find a space within which to work and enough connections to be able to perform.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Meanwhile, both in Europe and Nairobi, the teams get in touch with the rebels. The emergency coordinator of the French section met USC representatives in Rome and London to try to negotiate secure conditions for MSF's intervention in a zone held by the USC. In Nairobi, contact was made via an Agence France-Presse (AFP) journalist as the intermediary. Eventually, an MSF team met the rebels on 23 January 1991 in Somalia, where MSF had set up in the SOS hospital in Mogadishu, an orphanage/maternity hospital in the zone controlled by the USC.

Report on Visit to Rome, Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, Emergency Coordinator, MSF France, 9 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
[The USC representatives in Rome]
They know MSF
They respect MSF's idea of neutrality. I said to them that we didn't know, due to bad communication lines, which hospital we had set up in, but that it was definitely a general hospital.
This hospital, according to the USC, is under Siad Barre's control. USC doesn't view this position in a good light (due to the impossibility for them to access care) and has made four suggestions:

- Choose another hospital
- Choose another airport
- [They want] contact between USC and the teams in Mogadishu
- Another project on another site.

Nonetheless they respect MSF, the teams, and the wounded. I let them know that choosing another hospital was linked to several factors: water, electricity, accommodation, accessibility, and our security position. And that we therefore didn't have many choices… they accepted this argument well. The possibility of a project on their side is evidently welcome […]
There are around 100 Somali doctors working with the USC. The USC wants us to describe what we've been seeing. They want to help us logistically to intervene on their side.
Conclusion: It was a successful contact to make.
Positive: respect for our work wherever we are, whatever the location. Seemingly ready to support us
Negative: Is their contact with Somalia tangible? Is it reliable? Impossible to know their position with their counterparts on the ground (agreement, disagreement). Seem a bit far from what's happening on the ground.

'**Report** on Visit with USC in London, 11-12 January 1991', Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, Emergency Coordinator, MSF France, January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
The USC in London thanks us for the actions we've undertaken so far. They completely accept our mission (and its choice of locale) [but] of course they would desire an intervention better located in relation to them. […]
Media relations: they are well disposed to us exposing the mission to the media, holding events and sending in journalists. An agreement was made that MSF would give the green light before all media communications.

'**Summary** of Explo[ratory] Mission amongst USC, 14 January 1991, MGE [Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry]', Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, Emergency Coordinator, MSF France, January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
2) USC
The USC representatives in Rome, when pressured as to their contact with 'the field', "swear" they have been waiting for three days for confirmation of their messages being

received. They advise us thus to relay information via our teams in Mogadishu. We explained to them the danger of moving around for us, and the difficulties of communication between MSF and USC in Moga, so asked them to send their message through their route nonetheless. [...]

4) Conclusion:
The European [USC] contacts are worth hanging onto, but without deluding ourselves too much as to their real level of communication with USC Somalia and as to what might come of it. If, in Moga, establishing contact goes well, this explo mission could start in the middle or at the end of the week.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Working Again in Mogadishu', **Press Release** No. 18, MSF France, 23 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
A Médecins Sans Frontières team has been able to return to Mogadishu and is working in a hospital in a part of the city held by the USC rebels. The hospital, where Somali doctors and surgeons are working, receives around 200 wounded patients per day, half of them gravely wounded. The two Médecins Sans Frontières members in place are preparing for the arrival of a supplementary team bringing medico-surgical material and medicines. At the same time Médecins Sans Frontières is assessing the possibility of working to assist the people displaced in the government-held zones.
The Médecins Sans Frontières team had been forced to evacuate from Mogadishu on January 16. With the security situation for movements from one zone to another in the capital still risky, Médecins Sans Frontières renews its appeal to the belligerents to respect the neutrality of our teams, civilian hospitals, and the clearly identifiable vehicles of our teams, which are used to move around the city to rescue the wounded.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Overwhelmed by Influx of Wounded', **Press Release,** MSF Belgium, Mogadishu (Somalia), 27 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
The fighting which accompanied the taking of 'Villa Somalia' (the presidential seat) by the USC forces has translated into hundreds of wounded people flooding into a school transformed into a hospital where the Médecins Sans Frontières team is working. Yesterday, 120 gravely wounded people presented themselves at the hospital, causing enormous difficulties for managing the influx due to the insecure working conditions. Additional materials and medical personnel have been sent urgently into Mogadishu on Saturday, including two anaesthetic nurses and one tonne of medico-surgical material. On Sunday a surgeon and a logistician were also able to join the team already in the capital, along with an additional tonne of medicines. Médecins Sans Frontières hopes that the decreased intensity of the fighting following the departure of President Siad Barre can be put to good use to organise a massive aid effort for the Somali capital.

In the meantime, things get going in Nairobi. We don't know these rebels pretty well. The group that's known in Somalia is the SNM in the north. The USC, well, no one has heard of them. One of the few people to have gone to meet them is the permanent AFP correspondent in Nairobi, and he's getting to the end of his contract. So I go to speak to

him and his boss. We try to see how we can get ourselves to El Dubbo, which is currently like the HQ or the rear base for the rebels, you have to enter their zone through this place. The AFP journalist was there three months ago. At the same time, contact with the diaspora in Europe, between Italy and England, Marc Gastellu, and the programme manager manages to get the name of a pilot based in Nairobi, who apparently knows Somalia and would be ready to go in – with a whole bunch of conditions, because we didn't know much. So, we organise a meeting at the Hotel Panafrique, in Nairobi. Amongst the many Somalis present [at the meeting] we don't know who is who, we don't know anything about the clans. They present themselves to us as the revolutionary front that is going to overthrow the regime, and they seem determined. I give them the deal: 'I have a plane that can leave tomorrow for El Dubbo, [and] I want one of you to get into this plane and go with us.' And one of the guys there looks me in the eyes and says, 'OK, I'll come with you.' It's Osman [Ato, Somali businessman]. So, we organise this plane with this pilot, who hides his revolver in the plane … In the end AFP doesn't authorise its correspondent to come with us because there's no guarantee of his return date or being able to send back dispatches. In the corner meanwhile there's Stephen Smith, a Libération *stringer. I tell him, 'Come with us, it's made for you.' We've decided with the rebels that they must burn a tyre to indicate that they know we are coming and won't fire on us. Of course, there's no signal for us and the plane turns around. Eventually Osman says we should land, and we see the pickups arrive with their armed men. These guys recognise Osman immediately and fall into his arms. Our team passes very quickly into the Mogadishu zone controlled by the USC and sets itself up in the SOS hospital, an orphanage/maternity hospital with ten [operating] blocks, [it was] the only structure where we could set up.*

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 29 January 1991, the press agency Reuters, BBC Radio, and *The New York Times* announced that "according to a Médecins Sans Frontières representative", President Siad Barre had fled his presidential palace in a tank for an unknown destination, and the rebels had taken the palace. Within MSF, certain people were concerned afresh with these comments about the warring parties which, according to them, jeopardised the neutrality of the organisation.
However, the MSF teams were the only people, along with the few journalists there, to be able to describe the terrible situation for the civilian population of Mogadishu, where fighting persisted. V1

'Fighting Subsides in Somalia's Capital', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Jane Perlez, 29 January 1991 (in English).

Extract:
The airport, where Mr. Siad Barre maintained a well-fortified bunker, was the last important point to fall to the rebels of the United Somali Congress, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported today. The deposed president and top aides were reported to have fled in a convoy of more than 40 vehicles, some of them tanks, the BBC said […]
There was speculation in Nairobi that Mr. Siad Barre, who is said to be about 82, might try to reach Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, where his family landed soon after the fighting consumed Mogadishu a month ago.

The only independent contact between Mogadishu and the outside world during the turmoil of the last few days has come by radio telephone from a team of doctors with the French humanitarian agency, Doctors Without Borders. Accompanying them are a British environmentalist and pilot, Murray Watson, and a journalist, Stephen Smith, with the French newspaper, *Liberation*.
One of the French doctors who returned from Mogadishu to Kenya Sunday said some two-thirds of Mogadishu's approximately one million inhabitants had fled during the fighting. The doctor, Dr. Gastellu Etchegorry, said civilians were reaching his group's makeshift hospital with bullet or shell-fragment wounds. "The hospital floor is awash with blood," he said [...]
"In the days before Mr. Siad Barre fled," Dr. [Gastellu-Etchegorry] said, the president's forces had been "indiscriminately shelling the city, killing thousands of people".

'Negative Consequences of Public Statements on Situation in Somalia', **Fax** from Roelf Padt, General Director MSF Holland, to MSF Belgium and MSF France, 4 February 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Please be informed about possible negative consequences of MSF acting too much as a press agency, as in our view has been the case with Stephan van Praet's statements to Reuters and on the BBC Radio, regarding the political and military situation in Mogadishu last week.
As he concluded from this Uganda-example, MSF is clearly putting in jeopardy its neutral position, which is the key to our success in sensitive areas. Please refer to attached documents.

• 'Neutrality of MSF', **Message** from Malcom Walker, MSF Holland Uganda, to Roelf Padt, Director MSF Holland, Kampala, 4 February 1991 (in English) [attached as part of fax from Roelf Padt]:
Following this letter is a memo from Tom Kaptijn, logistics officer Soroti, expressing his concerns regarding statements attributed to MSF personnel in Mogadishu. As you will be aware, Soroti is an insecure area and for sometime now, MSF has been able to carry out its work with few problems because of the principle of neutrality, which was widely understood by all parties to the conflict. It is apparent that the articles in the *New Vision* (copy attached) and news items on the BBC have been heard and digested by a number of parties in Soroti and that significant doubts regarding MSF neutrality have been raised. My deep concern is that these doubts, if allowed to go unchallenged, will translate into physical problems, which could also endanger the safety of our personnel in the field. Accordingly, I strongly request that you give this matter your urgent attention to ensure that other MSFers are aware of the problems that can be created by careless comments that compromise the neutrality of the organisation and the safety of all.
Malcom Walker.

• **Letter** from Tom Kaptijn, for MSF Soroti, 29 January 1991 (in English) [attached as part of fax from Roelf Padt]:
Extract:
I would like to express my concern about our policy. After reading the "heroic" adventures of our colleague in Mogadishu, Somalia, I was wondering how it could be possible that MSF's name is used in these articles. But when I read yesterday *NEW VISION*, our local Ugandan newspaper, it was more [surprising]. My first reaction was: are they using their

brains or is somebody gone bezerk [crazy]? The article from which you can read a copy, sent with this letter. After this publication I was stopped by a NRA [National Resistance Army] army representative who stated that he would like to have a meeting with me. In this meeting he expressed that [neither] he, nor his superiors, were pleased with what they had been reading. And that they were wondering whether they have been told stories about MSF's so-called neutrality and if I could give them [some] sort of explanation. I had to explain that even amongst ourselves we were unpleasantly surprised and that I would inquire how this whole matter came to happen. Besides this incident, there are also other groups active in this country, also reading newspapers and in bad need of a good press agent. Uganda might not be hot news, internationally but what is going on here is not just some local problems. Therefore, I would like to have a sort of reaction from the side of the coordination.
[…] Yesterday I was asked about MSF policy by a small soldier (small=non-important). Today two majors approached me expressing the same concerns. Until now I managed to dodge them and maintain[ing] the good cooperation between us but I would like to give some sort of reply. Besides all this, we MSF'ers also discussed the issue, of course and I hope we don't have to remind you on the letter written to us by one of the major rebel leaders, recently. In case we do have to, here is a small content of it: "We are looking for publicity, and we are asking you people to do it for us. We know that MSF has been giving opportunities to other rebel groups in Africa. Like what happened in Liberia."
This thing has been discussed between ourselves as well as with our coordination. My suggestion would be: sort your problem with counterparts first and for the meantime let us stick to the rules and regulations we all agreed upon. Otherwise, our opinion can only be that you are unnecessarily endangering our positions here. This might sound harsh, but we think it the time to express ourselves. Open and eager for your reply we remain (of course).

• 'Barre Flees palace', *New Vision* (Uganda), 28 January 1991 (in English) [attached as part of fax from Roelf Padt]:
Extract:
Stefan van Praet told Reuters that MSF workers in the Somali capital, Mogadishu reported Siad Barre had fled in a tank to an unknown destination. "It is true he fled… this morning and 15 minutes later rebels took over the presidential palace" he said. Van Praet added that government forces still appeared to be in control of the airport and that heavy fighting is taking place in many areas of the capital. Telex and telephone links to Somalia have been cut since the United Somali Congress (USC) launched its offensive on December 30. The news from the MSF workers came after a satellite telephone link up to Mogadishu.

On 2 February 1991, while speculation continued about the destination of Siad Barre and his troops, Ali Mahdi Muhammad was named Interim President, formed a provisional government, and called immediately for international aid.
Emptied of two thirds of its inhabitants due to the fighting, the city saw the refugees return wounded and starving.

'Rebel Victory in Somalia', ***Le Monde*** (France), Jean Hélène, Nairobi, 29 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Did the president flee towards the south in the company of his soldiers, as the USC attested, or did he bunker down in the military camp close to the airport? No-one knows what became of him but the Médecins Sans Frontières coordinator based in Mombasa (Kenya) hesitated again, Sunday evening, to dispatch to Mogadishu a plane loaded with medical material, without the green light from the MSF team on the ground, despite the rebels announcing that they had held the airport since dawn [...] The Médecins Sans Frontières workers are the only foreigners in Mogadishu. Set up in a rebel zone in a little school transformed into a hospital, they have been operating for the past six days assisted by a few Somali surgeons. This hospital of fortune receives more than 100 wounded patients per day, and more again since the indiscriminate bombing of the past 48 hours. Thirty thousand refugees are now on the Kenyan border.

'A City in Ruin', ***Le Monde*** (France), 1 February 1991 (in French).

Extract:
"We need to reset to zero," declares Mr Ali Mahdi, the new Head of State, in his house at the centre of Mogadishu, lit by a candle and protected by hardened resistance fighters, assault guns in their hands. An endless stream of gunfire echoes constantly in the Somali capital, reports AFP's Special Envoy, Michel Sailhan. [...] How many people have died in Mogadishu? "Probably more than 5,000," replies the new head of state. What are you going to do now? "We need to reconstruct. We need aid from other countries," continues Mr Ali Mahdi, who leads the country provisionally, helped by the USC Executive Committee President, Mr Hussein Hagi Bood.
The city's inhabitants return. These mass returns raise fears of a famine, because there is nothing left in most of the shops, looted or burned during the fighting. The hospital is overflowing. The wounded are lying around the central yard. They receive care to the extent that it can be offered. Every five minutes a man arrives, his foot torn off, or a woman, her dress bloodied all over. The operating room resembles a butcher's shop, with blood covering the tiles. "Without potable water, everything that we do is essentially useless," says a doctor.

'Somali President Approves Interim Cabinet', **Reuters** (UK), Nairobi, 2 February 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Somalia's interim President Ali Mahdi Mohamed approved a caretaker cabinet on Saturday, a week after rebels overran the capital Mogadishu and ended the 21-year rule of President Mohamed Siad Barre [...].
Rebels of the United Somali Congress (USC), one of three major rebel groups which fought to overthrow Siad Barre, forced the ageing president to flee Mogadishu a week ago, ending four weeks of fierce street battles in the city. The rebels named Mahdi Mohamed, a Mogadishu businessman, as interim president on Tuesday. Some factions of the USC and of other rebel groups abroad protested against his appointment, saying it was too hasty. But there has been no evidence that the choice was contested in

Mogadishu itself. Mahdi Mohamed stressed that he was interim president and said his leadership would be a stepping stone in a process leading to free elections. Aid workers and journalists visiting Mogadishu devastated by January's fighting, have reported looting and sporadic shooting. The city is still not completely calm, they say. The whereabouts of Siad Barre, who is aged about 80, is unclear, although rebel sources have said he fled to his hometown near the border with Kenya.

Meanwhile, on 30 January 1991, the MSF team left Mogadishu for Nairobi, terrified by the heightening armed activity following the fall of Siad Barre. On 1 February, a part of the team, very soon reinforced with more personnel, returned to the capital and began to work in the Medina hospital, the old police hospital located in the city's south, because the SOS hospital where they were working previously was by that time too far from the epicentre of the fighting.
In a press release on 10 February 1991, MSF reaffirmed its neutrality in the conflict and demanded that humanitarian action be respected.

Press Release No. 22 on the situation in Somalia, MSF France, 10 February 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières is maintaining its teams on the ground and is sending in another cargo plane. The situation in the capital is stable, but confused in the rest of the country. A Médecins Sans Frontières team of four, which arrived in Mogadishu on 1 February, remains in Somalia and has been reinforced with three colleagues. The surgical team continues to operate in the Medina hospital in Mogadishu.
Médecins Sans Frontières reaffirms its complete neutrality in the current conflict and requests that all parties involved respect humanitarian action and the security of our teams on the ground.
Médecins Sans Frontières will attempt to charter a cargo plane for Somalia next week, the 17th plane sent since 30 December, loaded with 15 tonnes of medico-surgical material and logistical material including sanitation equipment, generators, and a vehicle, to supply the dispensaries and SOS hospital in Mogadishu.
Exploratory missions and additional supply missions for equipment and medicines are underway in the north and south of the country.

The team set up in the SOS [facility] with a surgeon and began to work. This lasted eight or ten days. We were even beginning to be able to send in material items because the airport had been under [government] control for several days. So the team operated on the wounded, primarily civilian fighters on the USC side. But little by little the team found itself in a corner. The day that Siad Barre fell the BBC correspondent, who I'd run into the day before as he left for Mogadishu, called me and said, 'When we arrived in Mogadishu your team was there and they all got in the plane. They said they were evacuating, so they've all returned to Nairobi.' It was a fact. When the Somalis had confirmation that Siad Barre had left the city people celebrated, so there were lots of gunshots, possibly weapons stores that blew or exploded, and, no doubt, looting. One part of the team based at SOS panicked and decided to evacuate even though some wished to stay. In Mogadishu the state of play had changed a bit because Siad Barre was no longer there and some people thought the war had

pretty well ended. We went back into the SOS hospital but the hospital manager didn't want us there anymore and anyway the hospital was now too distant from the centre of things, too far from the areas that the wounded were coming from. So we did a tour of Mogadishu looking for a hospital to set up in. That was when we found the doors of the Medina hospital open to us. It was the police hospital, which was only eking out its existence. It had a new operating unit, fully equipped and functional, that had never been opened; the padlocks were still on the doors. So the team installed themselves in Medina and began to work.

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Within MSF France, the Somalia crisis mobilised a group of people, including some who had participated in previous MSF missions in the country. In their eyes, the consequences of the Gulf War, which began in early January 1991 and was widely covered by the media, did not appear to be an emergency that should supplant Somalia. They pushed to expand operations and keep the Somalia crisis on the media agenda.
Frédéric Laffont, a French filmmaker who was producing a documentary marking the 20th anniversary of MSF, chose Somalia as one of the fields to be profiled. V2 His description of the situation on the ground, alongside that of a surgeon from the MSF team at the hospital in Mogadishu, was published in a follow-up letter to MSF France donors, which would generate record donations.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 25 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia (Brigitte [Vasset, MSF France Director of Operations])
We [first] worked in Somalia from 1980 to 1987. Since November a resistance movement took the towns around Mogadishu. At the end of December the USC launched an offensive attack on Mogadishu, fighting broke out in Mogadishu, and MSF went in.
SPM [Somali Patriotic Movement] (in the south)
At the beginning of January, 14 MSFers on the ground, two journalists, 18 tonnes of material.
1st stage: depart 4 January, Mombasa 5 January. 1 January: evacuation of the Italians; the French and Americans are already gone. 6 January: the plane does not land. 7 January: the plane lands in Mogadishu.
2nd stage: good relations with ICRC, then evacuation 6 January. Contact established with the USC. When the team arrives at the hospital on 8 January the wounded arrive, tipped off by the BBC that MSF is there. The communication problems are solved in two days, supply organised from Mombasa. On Thursday the Italian Embassy evacuates. On Saturday the team receives supplies. MSF are the last remaining foreigners.
3rd stage: Sunday 13, Maï [Sarant] has to travel from the other side of the frontline, a ceasefire is promised. 150 wounded each day. On the way back our car is shot at, we stop all movements. Monday there's shots all around the hospital. Tuesday and Wednesday more wounded and the clans are pressuring them to go to a hospital. Tuesday 15 – three armed men want to take a vehicle and Bruno Corbé. Vehicles stolen again that night.

Morning of the 16th – evacuation to Mombasa (tricky). Saturday 19 – two MSF + two logisticians travel to Elbur on the USC side. The team lands in Mogadishu, having travelled 300 km, taking 12 hours. At the SOS hospital a constant 150 wounded per day, 50% serious. dMaterials come in from the airfield 40 km to the north. Two new team members arrive, the team stays on the ground, it's just a little team in the hospital (able to evacuate quickly).
Pierrot [Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium Director of Communications]: You need to take care not to go into Somalia on 747s. Sometimes the planes should be smaller.
Maï [Sarant]: we should have travelled more lightly. A team of 14 was too big, unmanageable, lots of them were on their first mission. We weren't able to work on both sides. We were a little bit hostage to the clans. Discussion follows as to the choice of going in on a big plane with a significant initial amount of material and equipment versus a small plane with a small, mobile, and professional team. Surgery was the most important part of the mission.
Marcel [Roux, MSF France Vice President of Board of Directors]: the communication problems: there was a plethora of messages, coordination was difficult because the decisions changed too frequently, decision was also paralysed due to the communication overload.
Rony [Brauman, MSF France President of Board of Directors]: it had been decided "no telecommunications with Mogadishu – no continuation of the mission"; a new evolution for MSF
[1] Ease of communication must be managed. 2 the issue of the media: the emergency operation was [able to be] undertaken in full security because there was no pressure from the press.
3 no other organisation or group could have undertaken this operation.

Letter to donors, Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, March 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Dear Sir, Madam,
Several days ago, while one of our surgeons, having returned from Somalia, was making his mission report to me, there was a television broadcast of a horrifying report by a journalist who had followed Médecins Sans Frontières' teams in the same country. The accounts of these two men, each with their own professional point of view, as a doctor and as a journalist, attest to the same tragedy. The horror that they describe, the extreme suffering and the distress, are beyond our imagination.

Since the beginning of the war, while everyone who had the resources was leaving – diplomatic staff, members of international organisations, foreign residents – Médecins Sans Frontières has been sending its medico-surgical teams into Somalia and they have been the only ones treating people and witnessing the hell that was being descended into.
Médecins Sans Frontières teams have undertaken this emergency intervention in Somalia like they do everywhere that there are victims calling for their assistance.

Were they wrong to?

I leave you to judge and hand over to the surgeon and the journalist who have experienced the hell.

"*Mogadishu, two weeks after the main battle. The damaged walls of the capital bear witness to the fratricidal fighting which has raged in Somalia since the beginning of the year. Fixated on the [Persian] Gulf, the eyes of the world have not rested for a second on this conflict…*
"Without any means of communication with the outside, seven million Somalians live cut off from the rest of the world. Without witnesses, the tragedy would have played out behind closed doors if, since the beginning, Médecins Sans Frontières had not been at the Somalis' side.
"Scores of wounded people arrive each day at the hospital recently taken over by Médecins Sans Frontières. The organisation is working here alongside Somalis, also international staff.
"This crowded hospital is one of the rare places where medical care can be provided. The wounded that make it to the hospitals are the luckier ones. Their survival depends above all on being lucky enough to find some transport. But what of the situation elsewhere, where the health structures are totally destroyed and no longer have the barest of medicines? Despite the daily influx of severely wounded, and the precarious work conditions, the Médecins Sans Frontières hospital is an oasis.
"The frontline is more than 100 km from the capital. Weapons are the instruments of a deadly game which no longer spares children and women.
"Around 100 of them arrive each day with their child. The war means that they haven't been able to feed them. There is not enough water. Dehydration and malnutrition are the cause of the babies' suffering. Confronted with such distress, Médecins Sans Frontières are the only ones to act, the only ones to react.
"The Somalis have paid a heavy price to rid themselves of their dictator. At the same time the eyes of the world are blind to their misfortune, blinded by another 'spectacle'. Little by little Somalia is dying into oblivion, and that's not considered something worth looking at…"
F. Laffont – Journalist
"*The patients are admitted in the school that abuts the hospital. The school desks function as beds, but the majority of the wounded lie on the floor on mattresses or cardboard. They're all put there together, on top of each other because there are not enough places for them. There are 250 to 300 patients in this makeshift hospital. Pretty well all their dressings ooze pus. Three quarters of the wounds are infected, sometimes with the beginnings of gangrene. There are also a lot of amputations, the stumps running. Lastly, there are also an enormous number of open fractures immobilised by cardboard splints because there is no plaster. The dressings are dirty and ooze onto the cardboard. The wounded are left without treatment, without food. There is neither water nor electricity for surgery. All the procedures are done without local anaesthetic. The seriously wounded flood the hospital now. We're overwhelmed by the wave of emergency cases. We need to finish up [on each patient] more quickly. There is blood everywhere, the smell is appalling. Yesterday a dead body stayed on the floor of the consultation room for the whole afternoon. There are patients, cared for or otherwise, all over the central yard. The situation in the city is catastrophic. The Somali doctors are predicting an imminent famine.*"
Dr P. Faure – Surgeon, Médecins Sans Frontières

These accounts are so brutal, sometimes even so intolerable, that I hesitated for a long time to share them with you. I finally decided to send them just as I had received them. You are one of us, and I thought that you would react like our doctors in the field and know how to transform your emotions into action. Even in the middle of an emergency, in the middle of wars, it is possible to save many human lives. Ready and willing, our teams work without rest. Day and night, to exhaustion, they urgently perform surgery and provide care. We lack neither knowhow nor courage at Médecins Sans Frontières; what this team is missing is more medicines, more medico-surgical material and equipment – simply, resources. I ask for your financial support, because your donation

to Médecins Sans Frontières is the foundation of our action. I will never say enough how important your gift is for us, whatever the amount. Our relief missions rely on you. On behalf of everyone who awaits our assistance, thank you.

Somalia immediately touched everyone deeply at MSF France. This was immediately an emergency that was extremely sensitive and emotionally charged. Just as there were people who knew Afghanistan and those who did not, for Somalia too there were soon those people who knew everything about clans, the Hawiyes, the Abrigadirs Saad, the Abrigadir machine, etc. If you knew about all that, you were in the Somali clan. As for the others, the ones who didn't understand anything, well, too bad for them! On 2 January when the Gulf War broke out, we ended up with the likelihood of another emergency, which was going to no doubt explode and attract all the media's attention. At MSF, we were living to the rhythm of Somalia, though in January '91 with the emergency cell, and the Gulf War, it wasn't as if we didn't have much to do! Then we saw the first medical teams coming back from working in Mogadishu. I will always remember a letter from a doctor, who described the state of the hospitals. We had never seen such an apocalyptic description and we were extremely disturbed by it. I fought with the fundraising director – at the time I was doing mailings – to a do a follow-up letter along with the situation report. He said, 'Everyone is interested in the Gulf; Somalia, no-one.' He was absolutely right. But I was so touched by what happened in Somalia that I did not believe that others would not be. So I managed to wrench out of him approval for a follow-up letter on Somalia, telling him, 'It's our duty to inform our donor audience!' And this follow-up mailing, which incorporated the doctor's letter with a small intro, brought in a lot of donations. **V3**

In the aftermath, in February '91, we launched a series of documents to donors called 'Extreme Emergencies' to talk about the Gulf and Somalia. Basically, the documents said, 'there are emergencies that everyone takes interest in, and then those that no-one does.' And we covered the two, explaining how the emergency cell worked, hour by hour. We explained 'we get in at 10 am, and we get news from the logistician with the team in Mogadishu. And he tells us to call him back later because bombing has started and they need to get to shelter, etc.'

Anne Fouchard, MSF France, Communications Officer, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 20 February 1991, the news agency Reuters reported that according to MSF, "the signs of malnutrition are starting to show in Somalia." At the same time, obtaining supplies was becoming more difficult, with the Kenyan authorities refusing approval of some flights to Somalia.

'Signs of Malnutrition in Somalia, French Doctors Say', **Reuters** (UK), Paris, 20 February 1991 (in English).

Extract:

Signs of malnutrition are beginning to appear among people in Somalia, isolated from the world after six weeks of fighting, the French medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Wednesday.

MSF described the state of health and hygiene in the capital Mogadishu as alarming. "Medical facilities are paralysed and the need for medicine, medical equipment, and fuel is enormous," the group said in a statement.

MSF, which has sent doctors, nurses, and medical supplies to the country, said Mogadishu was quiet, but that violent faction fighting continued in the south of the country. Mogadishu has been in chaos since the overthrow of former president Mohamed Siad Barre last month. Water, food, and fuel are nearly exhausted, and power and telephone links with the outside world have been cut since the beginning of the year.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 15 February 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia (Brigitte Vasset): There are six Médecins Sans Frontières international staff in the single undamaged hospital in Mogadishu. MSF is mostly focusing on traumatology. The number of wounded remaining is not small; even if the fighting has stopped, the (ex-)fighters keep up sporadic attacks. The three [anti-government] movements (SNM, USC, and SPM) are due to meet soon [...] to discuss. Food supply is slowly emerging as an acute problem. Outside MSF, the only aid is coming from the United Arab Emirates (supplying medical materials and equipment and medicines) and the Belgian government, which sent two planes quickly. 20,000 to 30,000 Ethiopian refugees have fled into Kenya. 40,000 Somalis from the north have left for Ethiopia. In conclusion, [there are] security problems and difficult working conditions for the team, with famine threatening in the relatively near future.

Fax from Dominique Boutriau, MSF Coordinator in Somalia, to the MSF Belgium programme manager, 15 March 1991 (in French).

Extract:
1. We have just received a call from Thierry in Nairobi. The Kenyan authorities are refusing clearance for private airplanes to fly to Moga. The official reason is 'security problems'; the likely reason, 'collusion' between the Kenyan authorities and the Darod family [clan] (from South Somalia, SPM, Kismayo). Kenya allows flights to Kismayo. The flight ban to Moga does not apply to the Belgian army C-130 because it's 'government'.
2. Thierry adds that the Kenyan press is already chomping at the bit, denouncing Kenya's blocking of humanitarian action destined for Somalia.
3. Our team is thus blocked without a C-130 flight. We propose to look for other ways to get into Moga: Djibouti (MSF Holland), Yemen (MSF France). Meanwhile Thierry is meeting diplomatic authorities in Nairobi: EEC, Belgian ambassador, French ambassador, and the UN, to help unblock things.
4. Your comments?

B. SOMALILAND, KISMAYO

From 24 February to 3 March 1991, an MSF Holland team carried out an exploratory mission in the north of Somalia, close to the border with Ethiopia, a region held by the rebel group SNM. The humanitarian needs there were enormous; all the infrastructure for fundamental public services was destroyed during the war, with many people wounded by landmines.

At the beginning of March, an MSF office was opened in Berbera and a medico-surgical project opened in Hargeisa hospital. Other medical support projects were started in hospitals and a variety of health centres in Hargeisa, Burao, and Gebiley. SNM forces provided safeguards for the hospital and were also supposed to protect the humanitarian teams.
In mid-May, the fighting ended in the north of Somalia. SNM declared unilateral independence for the territory it controlled, which was not recognised by the other factions.
From June onwards, MSF Holland was no longer involved in the Mogadishu programme; MSF France took over its coordination, while Holland extended its two programmes opened in March in the north.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Intervenes in Somalia's North', **Press Release** No. 24 on Somalia, MSF France, 6 March 1991 (in French).

Extract:
While the civil war continues to ravage Somalia, Médecins Sans Frontières has dispatched an exploratory mission to the north of the country. Faced with the dramatic situation which prevails in this part of Somalia, a team of three immediately set up in the hospital in Hargeisa. The exploratory mission visited Hargeisa and its surroundings, and also Burao and Sheikh, under the control of the SNM. The city of Hargeisa is 95 per cent destroyed. The landmines still in the area cause serious injuries to four or five people a day. There are no reserves of water or electricity, and the population gets its water from a pool in the city centre. This single source of water is at risk of being polluted in the rainy season; with the floods, the health structures are paralysed and, even if the hospital is in a good state compared with the rest of the city, the severely wounded need to be transferred to Berbera. Eight Somali doctors work in Hargeisa's hospital. The town of Burao in turn is 75 per cent destroyed, but seems less disrupted by the war. The hospital, on the other hand, is no longer functional. The Médecins Sans Frontières teams also visited Sheikh hospital, which is in good condition.
Confronted with the urgent needs and a request from the local medical body, Médecins Sans Frontières started a medico-surgical project in the Hargeisa hospital (assisting in the surgical wards and re-establishing the main medical departments), a project which will be extended to the Burao and Sheikh hospitals. The team will be strengthened in the coming days with two doctors and one surgeon. Médecins Sans Frontières, the only humanitarian organisation to have entered Somalia since the beginning of the war, also has a team of eight people in Mogadishu.

'Doctors Report Northern Somalian Town Devastated by Civil War', **Reuters** (UK), Paris, 6 March 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said 95 per cent of Hargeisa was destroyed and the town had no water or electricity. Residents were collecting water from a pool, which risked being polluted by floods during the rainy season.
MSF, which has a team of eight working in the capital Mogadishu, said it had sent three medical staff to reorganise hospitals in the north and would soon send three more. Fighting is still taking place in parts of Somalia between factions of various rebel groups who formed a loose alliance to oust former president Mohamed Siad Barre in January.

Report on Visit to Djibouti and Somalia, 19-28 March 1991, MSF Holland (in English).

Extract:

1. Introduction

On 20/3 the ICRC decided to withdraw from Northern Somalia, after several incidents. The two most recent events involved (attempted) theft of vehicles. On 19/3 an ICRC car went to the airport, transporting among others MSF coordinator, UNHCR rep visiting from Djibouti and ICRC rep. En route, armed men stole the car and made off. The passengers hitched back. Later on the day the vehicle was returned with the dead body of one of the robbers still in it. SNM announced it to be a proof of protecting property, ICRC took it as a threat. Whatever the case, the ICRC decided to retreat. MSF position has been different from the start, mainly due to last year's cross border activities. Whereas ICRC has been accused of only supporting the Fakkash (Barre's army), considered an old time SNM supporter. This, in combination with the presence of a team in Hargeisa, led to the decision that MSF should not join ICRC. After the ICRC left, the SNM took over Berbera hospital and all stocks, as requested. Looting by the local population was prevented by the SNM. Of course, the ICRC departure did nothing to improve the already tense situation in Berbera. MSF team was visited that same day by the SNM vice-chairman and new MSI of Berbera hospital. SNM made clear that:

- Foreign assistance was most welcome
- There were no reports about any group wanting to harass foreigners
- There were still some security problems in Berbera
- Other parts were ok and there were no problems traveling, an escort was available if MSF wanted. MSF decided only to accept that night an extra guard [...]

3. MSF projects

3.1 Hargeisa

After discussions with the newly appointed Director of Medical Services [...] it was agreed that GED [German Emergency Doctors, an NGO also known as Cap Anamur] should continue and extend support to Hargeisa hospital, whereas MSF would concentrate on the MCH [Mother and Child Health] clinics and clinics outside Hargeisa. Partly as a result of the visit of the GED President (promising the Somalis heaven on earth, appointing a Somali as team leader for the GED and refusing to collaborate with MSF), but especially given the high needs everywhere and the lack of other assistance till now the MSF team was strongly in favour of this solution. [...]

The hospital, meanwhile, is not functioning badly. Ample Somali staff (including 7 m.d.[medical doctors]) is available as well as medical supplies and equipment. GED has also started food distribution for patients and staff. However, relations have been somewhat strained between expatriates and Somalis. The European conception of a well run hospital and the Somali do not match, leading to numerous differences of opinion. Also, the combination of emergency aid and management support once again proves to be difficult [...].

In Hargeisa, there used to be 3 MCH clinics, having available all basic medical services except in-patients facilities. Two have been totally destroyed. A third one could be repaired. However, the authorities also offered another governmental building, which seems excellent for the purpose. When the first MCH clinic is functioning a second one could be opened in Hargeisa. Meanwhile possibilities to start an OPD [Outpatient Department]/MCH in Gedebley are also investigated.

3.2 Burao

On request of the regional medical officer MSF will support Burao hospital. Especially support was asked for the following:

- curative care in the field of obstetrics/gynaecology
- preventive care (MCH)
- training of all staff, including doctors (e.g. ophthalmology, gynaecology, paediatrics) - medical supplies
- food for patients
- salaries

Besides support for the hospital, also help with MCH in and around Burao was requested. As in the Hargeisa region, the common opinion was to start gradually and better focus on one good functioning referral hospital for the time being. Sheikh could meanwhile be re-opened providing OPD and MCH only. MSF has agreed to step up support by sending a team of one m.d. with obstetrical experience, one midwife and one [...] nurse as well as one logistician. [...]

5. Conclusion

Security in Northern Somalia is unpredictable, but at present satisfactory. Needs are high and support until now insufficient. MSF can and should play an active role in mobilizing other organizations for support, especially in nonmedical fields. The team is functioning and finding its way daily. Funds are amply available.

'Interim Somali Government Calls on North to End Secession', **Reuters** (UK), 27 May 1991 (in English).

Extract:

Somalia's interim government has condemned the proclamation of an independent state in northern Somalia and called for the move to be reversed. "We would like to make it clear to the Somali people and the world that the northern regions are part and parcel of the Somali Republic," Mogadishu radio said, quoting a statement by the council of ministers. The Somali National Movement (SNM), which took control of northern Somalia after the ousting in January of former president Mohamed Siad Barre, proclaimed the Somaliland Republic in the north earlier this month. "These decisions and moves should be considered as against our national independence and the unity of the country," said Mogadishu radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

A ceremony to hoist the flag of the self-styled republic was held 10 days ago at Burao in northern Somalia. Its interim president, SNM leader Abdurahman Ahmed Ali, said the new state restored boundaries existing before 1960, when British Somaliland joined with Italian Somalia. The interim government in Mogadishu was formed by the United Somali Congress (USC) after its fighters forced Siad Barre out of the capital following a month-long battle for the city. The SNM has refused to recognise the USC government, which is also fighting other former anti-Siad Barre rebel factions in the south of the country. Two of those groups, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front and the Somali Patriotic Movement, have rejected the secession of the north. Siad Barre, somewhere in Somalia with remnants of his army, recently issued a statement saying he was still President of the country.

In April 1991, two MSF teams visited Kismayo, one after the other, to assess the situation due to certain needs already having been identified. At the end of September, MSF Belgium announced that it was not able to take charge of the project for the time being, due to lack of human resources, and left MSF France to take responsibility. MSF France decided to do nothing with it, while it still had an incomplete team in Mogadishu. Eventually, the MSF project in Kismayo was opened in March 1992 by MSF Belgium.

'Kismayo – Exploratory Mission 20-21 April', **Report**, MSF France, 22 April 1991 (in French).

Extract:

6. The conditions of our intervention

Politico-military situation: Since General Aidid took over military command of the USC, the frontline has never been so close to the city. Whatever this means in terms of the evolution of the situation (the city being taken by the USC, or negotiations), the needs on the ground easily justify an intervention by us. Our principle of neutrality in conflict situations means we need to rebalance our presence in Somalia to favour the Darod clan group. Our possible presence in Kismayo is not opposed by any of the different actors on the Somali scene, and particularly in Mogadishu.

Security

The reigning atmosphere in the city is much less tense than in Mogadishu. The presence of firearms and military vehicles is much more discreet, and the armed groups seem better coordinated and more united.

The attitude of the local leaders to the evacuation, which Fred [Frédéric Vigneau, MSF France Communications Officer in Somalia] and the ICRC witnessed, was very level-headed and responsible.

'**Report** of Visit to Somalia 29/04/91 - 02/05/91', Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Programme Manager (in French).

Extract:

2) The South, Kismayo:

Wim [Van Hauwaert, coordinator], Frédéric [Vigneau] and myself conducted the visit. It lasted one day and a half and of course it couldn't be conducted like a real exploratory mission, more like a first touching of base and a quick look at the situation. We travelled by car from Mogadishu to Kismayo. We went via the towns of Brava and Jilib, where we visited the health structures [...]

2-3) Kismayo: A coastal town

The regular population would be around 50,000 for the town and 50,000 in the surrounding area (district). The road from Jilib is good. There is an international airport able to be used by big freight planes and a significant port (one of the few deepwater ports). Displaced people and Darod fighters came into the city as a result of the fighting with the Hawiye of the USC. There were 150,000 displaced people in the city at the time (in addition to the 50,000 people normally there) and 300,000 people in the surrounding area. At the beginning of June, after the city was taken by the USC, there were hardly any displaced people left, they had fled to the south (the officials departed in an Italian boat, the others for Libya). The activity in the city is quasi-normal but there are many armed

men and a veritable armada of 'Mad Max' cars.[5] The security situation seems pretty good but there is always gunfire. During the night, we heard very long series of gunfire and the sound of an explosion.

2-3-1) The hospital: The hospital has a number of wings with the key in-hospital departments for various age groups but very dilapidated, and there is also a wing shaped in a 'U' where patients are cared for. When Thierry Durand and Frédéric Vignau visited (last week), the hospital was crowded (more than 500 patients); the day we visited, it was completely empty (three or four patients). The wards are difficult to use because of their dilapidated state, but the U-shaped section could be quickly refit to establish a little health centre (inpatient capacity around 10 beds). There is hardly any material/equipment or medicines (everything having been taken when everyone fled).

2-3-2) The displaced: The figures available for the remaining numbers of displaced people vary a lot between sources. We believe we managed to visit practically all the (improvised) reception centres:

- Police headquarters (200 people)
- Inch (500)
- Animal laboratory (300)
- Meat factory (empty)
- Leather factory (one family).

The majority of these displaced people come from Mogadishu or Bosaso. Nearly all of them say that they wish to return home. There were very few men; essentially it was women and children. Their living conditions are precarious: dirty water, no latrines. We didn't see any cases of malnutrition and there were some sacks of grain in some places. We saw armed soldiers outside the front of all the 'reception centres'. No one among the displaced seemed particularly frightened, but when the soldiers were with us, people said a bit too quickly, a bit too spontaneously, that they didn't have any security problems. There is another centre in Jilib where a sheikh has taken some displaced under his protection. ICRC, which assessed the state of the refugees in the centre, speaks of 10-15,000 displaced people in poor condition, with numerous cases of malnutrition. Wim passed through on his way back (cf. his report). The USC policy is to repatriate the displaced and have all of those who have fled return home. It is clear that the displaced risk returning when their food reserves will be exhausted (before leaving they took the 250 tonnes of food that the ICRC had transported in). We should expect some wounded, some sick, and without a doubt, some malnourished children among them. There is no health structure capable of receiving them [...]

2-4) Summary and comments: It is difficult to talk of any health structure in Kismayo, there's a big nothing. Due to the significant size of the population and the possible arrival of numbers of displaced people (in poor condition), it would be of great interest to MSF to provide medical support to the city. The emergency is medical (the Somalis would possibly like to establish a satellite activity that was surgical), but it risks becoming nutritional (due to the rainy season starting and it being too late to sow plants). Due to the rapidity of change here, it would be good if a two-person team established itself and further developed the project's direction. If the security situation allows it and if we don't lose too much time, there's no problem because the needs are there.

5. Nickname given to pick-up trucks mounted with machine guns, a reference to the *Mad Max* series of science-fiction films by the Australian director George Miller, released from 1979-1985.

Message from the Programme Manager for MSF Belgium to Brigitte Vasset, Director of Operations of MSF France, 30 September 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Hello Brigitte,
I am sorry to be replying to you so late [...] but there was lots of work to do in Peru. Regarding Kismayo, Somalia – I honestly believe that unfortunately MSF Belgium doesn't have enough human resources to respond now to the needs there. In my opinion, it would no longer be a bad thing if there was a well-defined policy for the south and the centre of Somalia and if one section would take over all the activities, that would not be bad either, it would avoid some coordination problems. Having said that, I (MSF Belgium) still consider this ravaged country as a humanitarian priority and do not rule out future projects in Somalia, but this would only happen after a re-evaluation of the needs and our resources. In conclusion, go for it, as we cannot currently start any mission in Somalia. Until next time, regards,
[...]

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 17 October 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: decision taken after meeting. Thierry on his way through from Nairobi, no explo mission or opening of projects until the team in Mogadishu is complete and stabilised.

During this period, 200,000 Ethiopians from the Ogaden, who had been living as refugees in Somalia during the separatist war conducted in the southwestern region, fled the conflict and returned to Ethiopia. Five hundred thousand Somali refugees followed the same route, along with 400,000 Sudanese refugees. Ethiopia too had been devastated, by drought and a civil war, which would end with the Tigrayans taking power at the end of May.
On 27 May 1991, MSF Belgium issued an alert about the catastrophic situation of these refugees, who had fled to a remote region which posed particularly difficult logistics for delivering aid. Moreover, the Ethiopian troops had been pulled out of the region and sent to fight against the insurgents in the north, leaving the refugees without any protection and at the mercy of looters.

'New Famine Crisis in Ethiopia's Ogaden as Refugees Flee Somalia', **Reuters** (UK), 10 May 1991 (in English).

Extract:
The United Nations responded swiftly to the crisis, but the remoteness of the area has hampered relief operations.
The roads are so bad – ironically made worse by the first rain for two years – that WFP [World Food Programme] trucks are unable to reach the small border towns where the problem is most acute.
"What's arriving is inadequate, and what is moving is inadequate," said Legussie Mulato, local representative of the government-run Relief and Rehabilitation Commi[ssion] (RRC).

U.N. officials express dismay over the lack of urgency shown by the central government in Addis Ababa – virtually paralysed by a major rebel offensive in the north.
"We are a little disappointed that the authorities have not been able to back more decisive action," said Tim Painter, U.N. special representative to Ethiopia.
The U.N. believes the authorities should exert more pressure on local truckers to take grain to remote areas at a reasonable cost.

'Catastrophe Threatens Ethiopian Refugee Camps, Doctors Say', **Reuters** (UK), Brussels, 27 May 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Thousands of people in Ethiopian refugee camps will die unless food and medicine reaches them soon, an international medical aid group said on Monday. "Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) issues a cry of alarm about the catastrophic situation at refugee camps in the east and west of Ethiopia," the group said in a statement. "If nutritional and medical assistance stops, thousands of people, especially children, are condemned to death in the coming weeks." It said the situation had deteriorated in the wake of retreats by the Ethiopian military in the face of rebel advances.
More than a million people were barely surviving in the area including 500,000 refugees from Somalia, 400,000 from Sudan and 200,000 Ethiopians who fled to Somalia. MSF said the only route for the transport of food to Sudanese refugees in camps in western Ethiopia had been cut. The stock of food there would not last 10 days, it said. At some camps for Somali refugees in eastern Ethiopia the malnutrition rate was 50 per cent. MSF said it, like other charity organisations, had withdrawn teams from the camps for Somali refugees because of a rapid deterioration of security since the retreat of the Ethiopian military. "Immediate measures must be taken to guarantee the refugees protection and to permit humanitarian assistance to continue."

'Ethiopia Takeover Brings Refugee Crisis, but May Ease Famine', **Reuters** (UK), Claude Regin, 31 May 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Relief agencies say an estimated 17 million people face famine because of the combined effects of drought and civil war in Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia. The office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said an already fragile food pipeline supplying more than one million refugees and 200,000 returnees in Ethiopia had been virtually severed. The food supply for a further seven million internally displaced people and drought victims was equally desperate, it said.
Looters had emptied many UNHCR warehouses of their buffer stocks while many vehicles had been stolen or destroyed, convoys attacked and bridges blown up. Camps once considered logistically difficult to supply had become totally inaccessible, spokeswoman Silvana Foa said. No food at all had reached several hundred thousand people in the eastern Ogaden province for days, she added. "We can't deliver food because the convoys can't get through and with the looting our supplies are nearly exhausted," Foa quoted UNHCR's representative in Addis Ababa, Cecil Kpenou, as reporting.
The Horn of Africa is already burdened with one of the world's largest refugee populations and the rebel push in Ethiopia has added to the havoc.

Having overthrown the regime, the Somali rebels awaited assistance from the international community. But the crisis of the Iraqi Kurds, who, after their uprising, were being chased down by Saddam Hussein's regime in the mountains north of Iraq and in Turkey, continued to overshadow the situation in Somalia. The international agenda was focused on the Gulf War and its aftermath.
In March 1991, all the MSF sections, working together, launched their largest ever aid operation to bring aid to the Kurds. In this era, the excellent and effective spirit of collaboration between the sections boded well for other similar operations in different contexts, including – why not? – Somalia.

The situation is unclear on the outside. People are saying that Siad Barre is on the outskirts of Mogadishu and will return. We start to dig into books to discover and understand something of what this USC coalition is about: the Habr Gedir, the Abgaal, the Murasade, the Makjakti, etc. For a while, it is a little calmer. They've kept a kind of government whose prime minister is the last prime minister appointed by Siad Barre. We meet all these people because we are the only representatives of an international organisation left in the city. They believe that the international community will return right away and that they will be celebrated for having overthrown the dictator. They hope that the Italians and the Americans will give them money to help them get established. But this is a period when nobody is interested in Somalia. There's Iraq and the war in former Yugoslavia. So nothing happens on the international community side of things.

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

MSF has another 'MSF Europe Unites' project running in spring 1991 for an emergency intervention, the big Kurdistan operation on the Iraqi border, which is unfolding in an atmosphere of good cooperation between the three big sections (Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam). It's working well and brings everyone together. It's the first time that MSF clearly detaches itself from the pack that is everyone else who is involved in some way in the emergency. We're covering the whole Iraqi-Turk border, and for me it's a key moment in the history of MSF, its history in the field, but also internally and institutionally. It's really the time when our relationships are at their strongest.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

At the end of May 1991, the frontline was no longer close to Mogadishu and a fragile equilibrium was established between the two USC factions, born from the Abgaal and Habr Gedir clans, while Siad Barre, withdrawn into the west of the country, still thought of himself as president of Somalia.
In July, six political factions signed a ceasefire, decided to form a common army to pursue Siad Barre, and officially named Ali Mahdi Muhammad as the head of the provisional government for the whole Somali territory.
At the end of August, fighting intensified between Siad Barre and USC forces in the centre and southwest of Somalia.

'Rival Somali Movements Agree on Ceasefire and New Government', **Reuters** (UK), Djibouti, 21 July 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Six political groups from Somalia announced agreement in Djibouti on Sunday on a ceasefire in their war-torn country. They also named Ali Mahdi Mohamed, leader of the United Somali Congress (USC), which controls the capital Mogadishu, as head of an interim government for the whole country [...]
The official communique revealed that delegates agreed to unite in forming a joint military force to flush out former President Mohamed Siad Barre and his supporters who are entrenched in southern Somalia.

'Somali Faction Leader Reports 480 Deaths in Renewed Fighting', **Reuters** (UK), Mogadishu, 24 August 1991 (in English).

Extract:
The commander of the armed faction controlling Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, said troops loyal to deposed president Mohamed Siad Barre killed 480 people in an upsurge of fighting in the war-shattered country.
General Mohamed Farah Aidid, military commander and chairman of the United Somali Congress (USC), said Siad Barre's fighters used heavy artillery and tanks during the clashes with the USC in central and southwestern Somalia [...]
Six factions agreed at peace talks in Djibouti in July, on a mutual ceasefire and joint efforts to defeat remnants of Siad Barre's army. He is reported to be in the west of the country, protected by members of his small Marehan clan.

C. UNDER ARMED GUARD

In a year marking the 20th anniversary of MSF's foundation, the Mogadishu mission team was the subject of in-depth reports by the international press.

'Daring to Heal', ***The New York Times Magazine*** (USA), Kathleen Hunt, 27 July 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Few countries exemplify the world's forgotten catastrophes more graphically than Somalia, which had the ill fortune in January to see the violent overthrow of its aging dictator eclipsed by the countdown to war in the Persian Gulf. Since the outbreak of civil war in 1988, Somalia had unraveled into lawlessness, falling to the mercy of rampaging soldiers and armed highwaymen. By January, when the climactic battle began for control of the capital, Mogadishu, most of the international aid community had pulled out of the ancient Arab seaport. Only a handful of Europeans remained, most affiliated with a small Austrian charity, SOS Children's Village[s]. As the havoc spread north toward the city of Berbera, even the International Committee of the Red Cross withdrew. Telephones and faxes were cut, and commercial transportation was paralyzed.
But one relief group defied conventional wisdom and headed in rather than out. On Jan. 7, a small team of surgical volunteers from Médecins Sans Frontières (M.S.F.) flew into Somalia from neighboring Kenya to operate on the war-injured. Twice in the next few

weeks, M.S.F. volunteers were forced to flee the country, first when waves of marauding Government troops invaded the hospital they were working in and later when rebels from the United Somali Congress overran Government headquarters and threw open prison dungeons and arms depots. Each time, the group slipped back in a few days later. As Government forces and rebel factions filled the skies with artillery fire, Somalia's only contact with the outside world was the radio line between the M.S.F. volunteers and their regional office in Kenya [...]

In January, there was Somalia. Since February, they have battled a cholera epidemic that began in Peru and is threatening all of South America. Barely had their weary volunteers brought shelter and medicine to thousands of Kurds last April when a cyclone sweeps over a third of Bangladesh, prompting Paris to dispatch an exploratory team to assess the destruction.

It's early May when a photographer and I arrive in Somalia. In Mogadishu, M.S.F. volunteers are still performing surgery day and night, hunkered down in the rambling, single-story pavilions of Medina hospital. Filled to its 130-bed capacity, the hospital has expanded outdoors, engulfed by patients with festering wounds, lying on foam mattresses under the flat-topped thorn trees. Except for the Red Cross, which has ventured back with a staff of three, the international relief community is still waiting it out in Nairobi.

The crackle of gunfire is commonplace in the Somali capital, and explosions shake the single-story hospital. In the stifling emergency room, there is no respite. A harried, sweat-soaked French nurse named Sabine Brunello plunges to the floor to examine a patient who has just arrived on a stretcher. Looking back over her shoulder at the crowd of spectators, she shouts In English, "Please, I want some help!" A few feet away, the body of a little girl, cut down by a stray bullet, lies abandoned by her despondent parents. The floor is littered with saturated gauze and discarded rubber gloves, and flies have begun to swarm around a souring puddle of blood. Glancing across the room, Brunello murmurs, "the kids are really the toughest."

Across the compound, the team's medical coordinator, 32-year-old Jean-Hervé Bradol, is taking a short break in the kitchen of the former nurses' quarters. "I wanted to work here, precisely because it is not in the spotlight, because no one cares about it," he says, slouching in the heat and humidity. "In fact, that's always been the great merit of M.S.F., they go to places others don't go" [...] "We take risks," he says of his colleagues, "financially, personally, with no feedback." The Somalia group was well aware of the disparity between the publicity surrounding the Kurdish disaster and that in Somalia.

Spirits are low on the M.S.F. team, which works from 8 A.M. until well after midnight. Relations have not been smooth with the local medical staff, who were alienated by the rigid work style of one of the first M.S.F. doctors to arrive. After weeks of diplomacy, M.S.F. has mended the rift, but recently some Somali doctors threatened to quit unless they were paid cash salaries in addition to the food rations they receive. "What are we doing here?" wonders Dr. Lionel Raffin, an anesthesiologist from Paris. "Now we are exhausted and our morale destroyed. Are we doing anything worthwhile?" Since Raffin arrived two weeks ago, the team has performed 82 major operations and stitched up or set bones on scores of other patients. To Raffin, this seems like a drop in the ocean. But his colleague Bradol sees the group's role more broadly, as independent witnesses to Somalia's agonizing upheaval. "We're not here to show people how to run a hospital," he argues. "We want to pressure the Government to act appropriately." Their presence also provides a gauge of the level of stability of the new Government. "It would be very negative if we pulled out," Bradol says. Indeed, Charles F. Leakey, the director of CARE's Somalia program, says other agencies take their cue from M.S.F., although they also criticize them. "Some say they are too brash, won't cooperate too much with other

nongovernmental organizations," he says. But "they dropped in and came out two or three times, and that told us a lot. If those guys can't work there, then we can't."

Monitoring the ephemeral state of order is central – indeed vital – to M.S.F.'s daily work, and the delicate task of keeping in touch with all the contentious factions in Somalia falls to Wim Van Hauwaert, a nurse from Belgium and the team's overall coordinator. At 28, and built like a bear, Van Hauwaert moves easily among his roles as manager, morale-booster and diplomat. Every day, he makes at least one tour through the rubble-strewn capital with his well-informed young Somali driver to assess the balance of power among the rebel factions and to evaluate the general level of anarchy. One morning, I go with Van Hauwaert to inspect two huge water-purification tanks that the team has provided for several thousand people in a shantytown on the outskirts of the city. Like everyone else, we take along an armed guard. The whole city has been on alert today after fighting broke out between rebel factions last night.

As the driver turns down a main boulevard, 50 men and boys spring out of nowhere and surround us, swinging rifles and rocket launchers and pistols and shouting guttural orders all at once. "Stop!" they holler. "No photos! No PHOTOS!" The tension mounts as we continue past a charred Government tank, near the Hotel Towfiq. Van Hauwaert signals with a low hand gesture for our driver to stop, both of them now seem alarmed by the number of machine-gun-mounted cars in front of the hotel and by the bands of heavily armed men who are shrieking, "get into the hotel!" Inside, the hotel receptionists stiffen as two gunmen, slung with bandoliers, storm past and up the stairs to the roof. Another four men are standing on the rooftop across the street, all aiming their machine guns at our hotel. Half an hour later, we slip out and continue on our tour.

Most of the M.S.F. volunteers in Mogadishu are veterans of other difficult missions, but no one expected the workload, tension, and deadly anarchy they found here. For the first three months, Medina Hospital was overrun with weapons; volunteers had guns pulled on them by families demanding that their relatives be treated ahead of others. "This is my toughest mission ever, and I've worked in Kurdistan, Mali, and Niger," says Jeanne-Marie Gomis, a nurse who specializes in war surgery. "One patient threatened, 'If you don't help me, I'll beat you.'" Despite the exhaustion, isolation, and unnerving volleys of gunfire and grenades as they work, a strong feeling of camaraderie exists among the M.S.F. staff. Each evening, they break for dinner at about 9, heading for the refuge of the old nurses' quarters. One by one, they flop down around the long table, to discover that once again, in the throes of Mogadishu madness, their Somali cook, Didi, has managed to whip together a tasty meal of fish, meat stew and rice. Didi wears a snowwhite chef's hat, which Bradol jokingly insists was not provided by M.S.F. Determined to relax during mealtime, no one even blinks at the persistent machine-gun fire that seems 10 feet outside the window. Rather, they lose themselves in anecdotes that capture the utter chaos of the place.

The table erupts in laughter over the story of the visit a month before by Dr. Bernard Kouchner who was appointed French Minister of State for Humanitarian Action in 1988 and who was a founder of M.S.F. When he asked Somalia's interim President what kind of humanitarian aid the French Government could provide, even Kouchner, who has undoubtedly heard his share of unorthodox requests, was taken aback by the President's instant response. "Arms," he told Kouchner. "We need weapons for our policemen, so they can try to bring some order to this place."

The MSF teams supplied medicines to hospitals and health structures in the city, in coordination with other medical organisations. But the flagship activity was the surgical programme in the Medina hospital. The teams needed to fit into the hospital management that seemed to want to return to its commercially-based operations as per before the war. MSF was planning a progressive withdrawal from the hospital "when the context allows". But in reality, it would continue to work there for a year and a half.
In July 1991, a reparative surgery programme also began. It would be stopped in November, as it was unable to cope with all the constraints imposed by the context.

'Report of Visit to Somalia, 29/04/91-02/05/91', Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, Programme Manager, MSF France (in French).

Extract:
1-4-2) Security:
Having a barrier at the entrance of the hospital has improved security conditions inside the hospital, but they remain suboptimal. It has to be acknowledged that a fresh incident has occurred, in which a patient pulled out a firearm to demand that he continue to receive pentazocine. Nonetheless, the decrease in tension after the fall of Kismayo has considerably improved things.
1-4-3) Somali patients and doctors:
The Somalis are not necessarily easy people to deal with. We've often heard this sentence. It is clear that in concrete terms there can be difficult situations sometimes.
- Many of the patients refuse their treatment or, even better, prescribe for themselves. Their demands: more injections, x-rays; this creates a difficult atmosphere, particularly because sometimes these patients are armed. Coming from fighting against Siad Barre's army, they expect a greater level of attention (which they calculate in number of injections). Many of the patients do not want to the leave the hospital structure within which they're being cared for, even if their treatments are over. Lastly, the surgical treatments, more often than not accepted only after long and difficult discussions with the patient and his family, are very often doubted. 50% of patients remove their plasters too soon, many get rid of their traction (and try to remove their external fixation), nearly all refuse amputations.
- The Somali surgeons feature at different levels. The commitment of those who should normally be working at the Medina causes frustration most often because of their lack of will to work. It is clear for a number of them that commitment should have financial implications borne by MSF. This lack of commitment should be tempered however by the work done by the Somali teams in Digfer and also by the improvements in the level of work that I've been able to observe in the Medina hospital. In addition, some of the surgeons work at Medina, where the working hours have been divided to assist in better planning of the procedures: morning = Somali teams, afternoon = MSF teams.
1-4-4) Medina hospital:
We knew very quickly after we set up in Medina hospital that it would be difficult to work. This hospital is the former police hospital and non-police patients treated there had to pay high prices. However, this hospital offered good working conditions, allowing us to move in immediately. It is clear that this hospital does not provide the conditions for a medium- or long-term setup. Working conditions have improved greatly since the opening in February and I was impressed by the work being done by the medical and nursing teams. But this hospital obviously wishes to return to its earlier status: three-four

interventions per week and able to fill its pockets by selling everything that can be converted to cash (surgical procedures, drugs, x-rays, etc). It is clear that a withdrawal should be planned for as soon as the context permits (new facilities for surgery, a decrease in admissions). I have not been able to meet the director [...] He asked for a contribution from MSF of $2,000. We expressed our refusal to the Ministry of Health, explaining that it would be unhealthy for MSF to create its own "army of surgeons" and so discriminate against the other health structures [...] We need to make plans now for a progressive withdrawal from the Medina, articulating with:
- Greater support at Digfer. This support would constitute provision of materials and equipment, and medicines. In addition, we have also reviewed assisting with human resources for anaesthesia and orthopaedics. This needs to be planned for; it is necessary of course to assess the needs and the work conditions, and all the more, before initiating these types of activities. It needs to be clarified with the Somali teams where the limits lie for our intervention.
- A new operational base: a house, or office. This could be useful for work in Digfer and for other projects. In the future, when the security situation and the communication channels allow it, it could also function as the base for MSF projects in Somalia.
- Exploration missions in Mogadishu and its surroundings and, when security conditions allow, other cities.
The Medina teams could be reduced in the coming weeks with a transfer to Digfer.

'MSF France in Somalia – January 1991-May 1993 – Mission evaluation – Final **Report**', Virginie Raisson and Dr Serge Manoncourt, 4 February 1994 (in English from French original, translation by Richard Swanson and Eric Bullington).

Extract:
The facts:
June 1991:
• Survey of 600 cases [for] diagnosed for orthopedic surgery, feasibility study as an MSF program
• Operating room opens at Medina Hospital; new and European-standard
• Relative calm in the city of Mogadishu
• Change of coordinator; [...] Lortat-Jacob, who is to supervise the program, is unavailable to conduct a field evaluation until September 91
July 1991:
• MSF program for a population of 200 cases is launched
September 91:
• Clash in Mogadishu; emergency cases rise again; elective surgery program suspended
• Highly negative evaluation by Lortat-Jacob in the field
November 91:
• Elective surgery program is permanently discontinued as fighting breaks out in mid-November 91
Problems encountered:
• Inadequate evaluation of program's constraints (post-op; multiple operations) and of its unsuitability for the Somali context (emergency conditions begin again)
• Program fails (incompetence; technological "bubble", criteria for operations and protocols are too sophisticated)
• Patients reject therapy; return to traditional medicine
• Lack of outpatient follow-up
Discussion points:

• Does the failure of the plastic surgery program in Mogadishu rule out this type of program for the future? Is there an alternative?
• How can MSF avoid the failures that resulted, associated with its aggressive attitude to intervention in its choice of programs?

The security situation continued to deteriorate in the city and in the hospitals, and so it became inevitable that MSF would hire armed guards to ensure protection of its personnel and its patients.
The programme, established in an empirical way, would be regularly questioned. Was it relevant? Did it not lead to security risks that were too great? Moreover, MSF employed armed guards supplied by Osman Ato, a businessman linked to the Habr Gedir Clan of General Aidid. Did this exclusive arrangement not damage the image of neutrality that MSF wished to preserve to be able to respond to needs without discrimination?

Message from François Jean, Director of Studies at the MSF France Foundation, to Patrick Vial, MSF Coordinator in Somalia, 4 September 1991 (in French).

Extract:
Patrick,
[...] In light of the ever-evolving and volatile situation that prevails in Somalia, it is essential that we continually adapt to the changes. From this point of view it seems that our positioning in Mogadishu is not really adapted to the actual situation; the legacy of decisions made in a context that has since evolved, it puts us in an awkward position for current evolutions. These evolutions are obviously complex and uncertain but they can, if we stay within generalisations, be characterised within two plausible scenarios for the coming weeks:
• A scenario of stabilisation where the apparent normalisation of these past days would turn into a superficial restoration of lawfulness. In this hypothesis, we will find ourselves wrong-footed, marked as we are by the protection – however visible or not – of what is perceived as a private army whose existence alone is an insult to the state, without counting in the position of Osman and the wounded sensibilities since the round [of political negotiations] in June.
• A scenario of tension, which could explode into a show of force by Aidid/Ali Mahdi. In this hypothesis we would not only be marked as under the wing of one of the protagonists, but also find ourselves parked in a compound vulnerable to becoming a target in the conflict.

I'm very conscious that these scenarios have only been roughly formulated. In the fluid situation prevailing in Mogadishu there are plenty of other possible evolutions. But whatever they are, it is important, I believe, to set ourselves apart as soon as possible from Osman. This repositioning needs, it must be understood, to be negotiated gently, with diplomacy and in stages to avoid offending certain sensitivities.
Relinquishing the Brownies (armed pick-up escorts) should result, I hope, in reducing the visibility of these types of links. As we have discussed at the same time, we could buy some sort of vehicle ourselves for use in Mogadishu. But, it needs to be clear that this reduction in one of the tools for protection does not mean you should drop your guard; please remain vigilant.

In parallel it would be appropriate to cut back on our relations with Osman (i.e. the water truck, the monopoly on any changes we make) as much to limit the extent that we're ripped off as to show that we're not completely tied to him. Lastly, would it suit us to discreetly make ourselves aware of available housing so as to have an option if we feel, one day, that the compound doesn't provide enough security. These, in no particular order, are the things that come to mind at the moment. Please don't hesitate to call me if you wish to discuss them.
Salam to all the team. Regards,
François.

'President's Report' (May 1991-May 1992) at the Annual General Meeting of MSF France, 23 May 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia poses enormous security problems. Our intervention in Mogadishu, in a context of war, has also been marked, although this was last year, by injuries to our members, numerous evacuations, and a certain number of veritable miracles which allowed our teams to not be harmed. We know that it is a conflict that has been deadly for humanitarian organisations, and ICRC and UNICEF have paid a heavy price for their missions in the country. We have begun to fashion a solution for these security problems, but the solution itself creates very real problems for us regarding our principles. The solution consists of recruiting paid bodyguards – actual militias – to safeguard our movements and, principally, our convoys.
However, humanitarian action conducted in the shadow of guns, canons and bazookas is not a simple thing from the point of view of our principles or in a war situation because, obviously, the people who possess the guns possess some of the power. There have been debates, repeatedly, proposing the mission be withdrawn or suspended, but the decision in the end has always been to maintain the mission, acknowledging its useful political significance because we are treating hundreds if not thousands of wounded. There hasn't been any real alternative solution in Mogadishu; thus our decision, which makes a lot of us uncomfortable, but for which obviously we take full responsibility.

They dropped me in there and said, 'You're going to be head of mission.' When I arrived I was a little surprised at the armed context that we were within, but there was no other way of working there, it was impossible otherwise. At the beginning, I was extremely uncomfortable. I spent my first six months on this mission trying to understand the environment and how it was evolving and where the risks were coming from. Why was this person from that clan getting angry? Every day I had to intervene on things to do with security. Our nurses and surgeons were having guns pointed at them in the surgical block and on the wards. Some of the patients had weapons under their mattresses and if they weren't given the antibiotic that they wanted they pointed them at the head of the nurse. It was a bit mind-boggling. In a situation like this, I'd bring my guards with me and calm the guy down. Being confronted by security incidents like this, by potential risks, you ask yourself some questions. You explain it to yourself by what clan he belongs to. But sometimes, his reaction has nothing to do with clan things, but with the Somali mentality. Little by little, you understand the psychology of the people in the area and you come to understand that it is absolutely necessary to diversify the composition of the security team because if not you're marked and you make enemies in the opposing clan. It was necessary to be able to say that we weren't for one particular clan but for everybody. But, we had to do this a little negatively towards our protectors

at the outset, the Aidid clan, and then go over to the Ali Mahdi clan side to explain to them that we weren't members of the Aidid clan, that we were MSF and there for everybody. We worked on this for a few months and at a certain point we felt more at ease because we had gone to such-and-such a place in such-and-such a part of the city taking guards with us from such-and-such a clan rather than another and we had been better accepted. It takes some months to build these types of relationships, and someone coming from Paris who doesn't understand anything about this background says to themselves, 'They're crazy.' It's true that every now and then bullets whistled by as we passed. There was a degree of risk that we could not ignore, but that I accepted.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Once we'd arrived, Osman Ato, a businessman with interests a little bit everywhere in the region, offered himself as our logistical support. He was a guy who was open, easy to get on with, dynamic, impressively effective, who guaranteed us access to the decision-makers. He was really someone with connections. Obviously, it's through him that we recruited the armed guards. How else would that have happened? We weren't going to put a little notice up in the streets of Moga [...] Then, in the dynamic flux of the conflict, and the polarisation between Aidid and Mahdi, he chose his camp and he became a sort of ministry of armaments, of logistics, for General Aidid. The ICRC on the other hand had composed a sort of mosaic with their team of armed guards by opting for clan plurality to reflect society. For MSF, with our blind approval, not having the information, we trusted his judgement. Patrick took almost the opposite option, not attaching himself to Aidid or his clan but simply [going with it] because it was the biggest clan. It is really Patrick who was the clan micro-surgeon, a bit too much, without doubt, because he lost himself in there!

We took the decision to have armed guards in stages in a way. It starts with a few people to guard a warehouse, then to protect a convoy. And then you notice that what's protecting the convoy is a Mad Max, which is not symbolic protection, it's really dangerous. The Mad Max, it was also Osman Ato's men who were creating them. The workshop was 100 metres from our house. On top of that they repaired weapons, they tested munitions throughout the night. You had the impression of being in a trench at Verdun. People were firing everywhere, it was demented.

François Jean [Director of Studies at the MSF France Foundation] was very shocked by the way the guards staked their claims. Somalis are known to have a unionist side to them. When negotiations are done with a Kalashnikov on one side of the table and on the other, a pen, it is not equal and this gives rise to some very tense and stressful moments. That's what François had been part of and he basically said that we had become the prisoners of our guards. Patrick contested this and said that it was more complicated than that. There were still some ways open for recourse; Aidid, Ato, the authorities could bring some calm. We were able to get rid of some guards thanks to external authority, even though it was in fact impossible to exercise this authority. So we were not a prisoner as much as François said, but we were far from being as free as we thought we were at first. François therefore raised a real problem. But we laid this issue to rest by deciding to keep going.

At the time, as president, I had no crisis of principles and today personally I have not changed my mind. Regarding taking the clan option I was really sceptical but I didn't know Somalia well enough to propose any other alternative. That said, in terms of the debate about the relevance of recruiting armed guards I still think that if we had not been there to do the job, there would not have been anyone. It was a situation of absolute misery, armed groups everywhere, no police and no army. So the price of our operational presence was armed guards, who

helped us to act. If you didn't want to pay them you could not stay there. It was a tragic situation in the Camusian[6] sense of the word: no good could come out of it.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

We had big debates, particularly during the Coordinator Weeks [in-house training and annual meetings], on the principle of whether or not to have armed guards. Some people went so far as to say 'we can't work with armed guards so we should not work in Somalia.' Then, people debated choosing armed guards coming exclusively from one or another clan. There was a point from which seemingly all the [security] incidents experienced by our teams in Somalia involved our armed guards, to whom we were hostage.

Dr Brigitte Vasset, MSF France, Director of Operations, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 8 September 1991, violent fighting broke out between the faction loyal to President Ali Mahdi and the faction supporting his rival, army Chief of Staff General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who demanded the president's resignation.

'Many Casualties in Somalia Fighting, Mogadishu Radio Says', **Reuters** (UK), Nairobi, 8 September 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Mogadishu radio said many civilians were killed or wounded in three days of fighting in the streets of the Somali capital, but order was being restored [...]
Diplomats and aid workers in Nairobi had reported heavy fighting in Mogadishu and said the limited hospital facilities there were trying to cope with large numbers of casualties. Aid workers who flew out of Mogadishu reported an apparent conflict between the USC leader, Ali Mahdi Muhammad, recently appointed interim President of Somalia, and his army chief, General Muhammad Farrah Aidid [...]
Ali Mahdi was sworn in as president last month after peace talks held in Djibouti produced agreement between many of the factions operating in Somalia since the overthrow of President Mohamed Siad Barre in January. Siad Barre is holed up in a remote region of south-western Somalia with remnants of his former army.

'Somali Rulers Order Halt to Fighting', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 12 September 1991 (in English).

Extract:
The ruling United Somali Congress has ordered a halt to fighting between rival USC factions who have been locked in battle since last week [...] The USC also urged relief agencies to provide aid to victims of the fighting. At least 300 people were killed and 700 wounded in fighting between the factions in the Somali capital Mogadishu last week, aid workers said. [...] Fighting is said to have started when Somali interim President Ali Madhi

6. Albert Camus, French writer and philosopher.

Muhammad awarded damages to the Somali Patriotic Movement, whose positions in the south were attacked by USC in February. Aidid was believed to have disagreed with the decision and launched an attack after delivering an ultimatum to Muhammad. They both belong to the Hawiye confederation, but are in different clans, the source of much of Somalia's rivalries. The interim government was formed after dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was driven from power in January.

Sitrep from Patrick Vial, MSF France Coordinator in Somalia, to the programme manager in Paris and the field coordination team in Nairobi, 16 September 1991 (in French).

Extract:

General and political situation

Calm, but tensions likely to arise. Everybody senses the possibility of a fresh clash. Negotiations: mediation undertaken by a committee bringing together the seven clans of the USC.

Objective no. 1: Maintain observance of the ceasefire – retreat of the armed forces to beyond the city – commitment in writing by the two enemy clans (Abgaal and Habr Gedir) to respecting the decisions of the committee; ditto, for Ali Mahdi and Aidid.

Objective no. 2: Under ongoing consideration – taking a long time – analysis of the causes of the clash [between the two clans] and how to find a permanent solution to the problem [...]

In summary

Aidid is for a government made up of Somalia's 'liberators', keenly aware that he needs to placate his own revolutionary troops. He claims he's been very patient with Ali Mahdi, who is trying to go solo and oust Aidid. Ali Mahdi remains intransigent and preaches peace with the Darods. He proclaims himself as president of all the different Somali groups, as if it was already an established fact, rather than president elected by the Hawiye. The showdown has started, all that remains is to know whether Aidid will play his card as strongman, military man, at the risk of recanting in the eyes of the people and the international observers.

MSF's position

Our image as 'MSF Sahaad'[7] has already gone up a notch as you can imagine. As François [Jean] was saying, we're marked as being protected by certain protagonists, and boxed in in a compound susceptible to becoming a target. I'm multiplying my diplomatic efforts to pull back from the edge, but this doesn't resolve the fundamentals of the problem. The ideal would be, obviously, to move to somewhere else, to change 90% of our staff and to reconstitute our security team so that it was mixed, and effective. This would require, in my opinion, significant financial investment, a complete halt of our work for at least two weeks, a luxury that we cannot really afford for the moment. Had a meeting with Osman who reassures us regarding our security, says that we shouldn't make anything of Ali Mahdi's intimidation attempts, but that we remain free to leave his compound if we wish. He also mentions that SCF, CARE, and even the UN are under his protection since they're in a section of the city that he controls (sic!). I insisted on the necessity of keeping us aware of the nature of any risks, rather than managing them on our behalf.

7. Sahaad: sub-clan of the Habr Gedir clan to whom General Aidid belonged.

On 17 September 1991, a Red Cross plane carrying medicines and medical material was hit over Berbera, in the secessionist part of northern Somalia.
One week earlier, the United Nations suspended its aid operations in Mogadishu, just one month after having resumed in the country.

'Red Cross Plane Hit by Missile over Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 17 September 1991 (in English).

Extract:
A Red Cross plane was hit by a missile over war-torn Somalia on Tuesday, forcing the pilot to make an emergency landing in neighbouring Djibouti, a Red Cross spokeswoman said. The two crew members and three passengers were unhurt. The plane, a Dornier, was carrying medical supplies for the International Committee of [the] Red Cross to the northern port of Berbera. It had come from the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, and had first dropped relief supplies at Mogadishu. It was hit in the tail, apparently by a ground-to-air missile, at an altitude of 9,600 feet over Galkayo, where fighting has recently been reported between clan-based factions [...] The Red Cross was considering whether to suspend relief flights to Berbera for the next few days, the spokeswoman said.

On 2 October 1991, a new government was formed. General Aidid, who judged its composition too unbalanced in favour of the president's clan, declared that he did not accept it. While observers predicted an escalation of tensions between the two clans, on 23 October, the Somali government accused the forces loyal to Siad Barre of destroying the country and committing acts of genocide.
Meanwhile, on 11 October, Siad Barre called on the international community to deliver urgent food aid to his people. On 15 October, the World Food Programme announced that 4.5 million Somalis risked dying of hunger.
For the majority of international aid organisations, the situation was too dangerous to allow for aid operations.

'Somalia Forms New Government as Fighting Propels Nation to Chaos', **Reuters** (UK), Aidan Hartley, Nairobi, 2 October 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Hundreds of people died in four days of fierce street fighting last month after Aidid demanded Ali Mahdi's resignation. He accuses the interim president of mismanagement and breaking an agreement with other armed factions, signed last year [...]
Political leaders said the factions might come to a temporary truce in order to fight off the clan forces of Siad Barre. His troops are reported to have advanced to within 180 km (110 miles) of Mogadishu from his western ethnic stronghold where he fled after leaving the capital. [...]
Ali Mahdi's rule is not recognised in most areas outside the capital. Presidential aides said nearly half the new cabinet were from the Hawiye clan, an imbalance that could further annoy rival clans.
Widespread famine has now struck the country with malnutrition rates as high as 90 per cent, relief officials said. One source close to the government said: "In Mogadishu people are starting to fight over food."

'Somali Authorities Appeal for Food', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 11 October 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Somali authorities have appealed to the international community to send emergency food aid to the war-ravaged nation where hundreds of thousands of people face starvation, Somali radio said Friday [...] Last month, [the] United Nations under secretary-general James Jonah appealed for 400 million dollars to help feed and care for 22.5 million people threatened by famine in the Horn of Africa, which includes Somalia.

'Somali Government says Siad Barre Loyalists Lay Waste to Country', **Reuters** (UK), Nairobi, 23 October 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Somalia's government on Wednesday accused forces loyal to deposed president Mohamed Siad Barre of laying waste to the country, killing and displacing hundreds of thousands of people [...]
The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said in a report this month that 4.5 million people – 60 per cent of the country's population – were at risk from starvation due to the effects of civil war. [...]
But relief agencies and diplomats say that political faction leaders either cannot or will not stop fighting between the clans they control. They say it is too dangerous to mount any proper aid programmes.

On 7 November 1991, Save the Children announced that the arrival of Somali refugees and Ethiopian returnees in Ethiopia's eastern and economically lifeless Ogaden region carried the heavy risk of a food crisis for the region, and called on the international community to increase its aid.

'Ethiopian Region Faces Food Crisis as Refugees Return', **Reuters** (UK), London, 7 November 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Ethiopia, which was devastated by famine in the 1980s, faces another food crisis because of a wave of returning refugees unless a world relief effort can be organised, the charity Save the Children said on Thursday. A survey team sent by the charity to Ogaden in eastern Ethiopia found that refugees returning from neighbouring Somalia were swelling the rural population to the point where food resources were running out. [...]
The helicopter team discovered that an estimated 250,000 people had crossed into Ogaden from Somalia, boosting the population by up to 30 per cent. Villagers were doing their best to feed and accommodate their destitute countrymen but could not cope with the scale of the problem, the British charity said. "An official relief effort must be joined to the unofficial one," the charity said.

D. AT THE HEART OF THE 'TOTAL WAR' IN MOGADISHU

On 17 November 1991, after several weeks of calm, extremely violent fighting pitched the troops of President Ali Mahdi and General Aidid against each other in Mogadishu. The president retreated to the east of the capital, while Aidid held on to the other parts of the city. In the space of ten days, between 1,500 and 2,000 people were hospitalised from both sides. MSF and ICRC remained the only two aid organisations operational in the capital.
The MSF team reported to the press that the fighting was preventing hundreds more of the wounded from reaching any of the four hospitals in the city. The ICRC, which had a team of eight in the capital, described an appalling situation. The two organisations called for a ceasefire to be able to attend to the wounded.

'Mogadishu Quiet as New Strongman Takes Over', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 19 November 1991 (in English).

Extract:
General Mohamed Farah Haideed appeared in control of Mogadishu Tuesday after ousting interim president Ali Mahdi Mohamed, who fled the capital Monday following 48 hours of fighting, according to reports reaching here. Relief workers contacted in Mogadishu said the city was calm with only sporadic shooting around two pockets of resistance from Ali Mahdi supporters on the northern fringes of the city [...]
The airport, closed since the weekend, was expected to reopen on Tuesday, according to foreign aid organisations in Nairobi who said they were waiting for flights to resume to send personnel and medicine into Somalia. The French organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) said 18 employees of the Italian Embassy, which Haideed's men ransacked on Monday, had taken refuge at the group's Mogadishu headquarters.

'Somali Capital Rocked by Bloody Faction Fighting', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 20 November 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Several hundred people are feared killed in the latest bout of heavy fighting, which erupted Sunday between rival factions of the ruling United Somali Congress (USC), residential aid workers said.
[...] Patrick Vial of the French medical group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said about 150 people had been admitted to the Medina hospital on Tuesday, at least 10 of whom, died. About 400 injured have been admitted to the hospital since Sunday, overstretching the MSF team and obliging them to pitch tents in the grounds to accommodate patients. The nearby Digfer hospital was also overflowing. The chief doctor there, Mohamed Mahmoud Ali, said 220 patients had been admitted since Sunday.

On 26 November 1991, MSF's regional office in Nairobi reported in a press release that 1,500 wounded were hospitalised in Mogadishu. It called on all parties to the conflict to declare a ceasefire and to open a dialogue to end the bloodbath. MSF also called on donor countries to increase their financial aid to the few aid organisations still intervening in Mogadishu.

Press Release, MSF Regional Office for East Africa, faxed to Brigitte Vasset, MSF France Director of Operations, 26 November 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Since the outbreak of the fighting in Mogadishio the team of Médecins Sans Frontières in the capital town has been witnessing and is trying to cope with what can be called a human tragedy.

From the 17th to the 23rd of November we assume that in the three hospitals we are monitoring, Medina, Digfer, and Benaadir, at least 1,500 people have been admitted for war injury. Among those admitted it is a reasonable estimation to say that 20% have lost their life. During that period 350 emergency surgical operations have been carried out.

Saturday, the 23rd we have been able to cross the frontline for the first time with the green light of both parties in presence and through the mediation of Somali doctors.

During this visit we have been able to meet with M. Ali Mahdi Muhammad who urged us to act rapidly on their side.

This morning at 8.30 a.m., one full ferry was organised by MSF and succeeded to bring essential surgical and medical materials provided by MSF. ICRC and SCF in the northern part of the city are controlled by the Abgaal forces.

The situation in this part of the town is very critical on the medical side, some houses were transformed into makeshift hospitals and we assume that two to three thousand people injured by the heavy fights are landlocked in this area.

We [appeal to] the parties in conflict in Mogadishu to find their way to a ceasefire and to enter a constructive dialogue in order to stop the bloodshed in this war-torn city.

We [appeal to] the various institutions and donor countries to increase their financial support to the very few relief organisations left in Mogadishu and who are trying to bring a last hope to a population in distress.

On 13 December 1991, the MSF coordinator in Nairobi announced to AFP that the MSF team in Mogadishu was running out of medicines and did not even have one litre of blood to effect a transfusion. MSF's supply depended on maritime transport, a boat chartered by the ICRC. But bombing of Mogadishu's port was preventing any offloading.

On the same day, Hashi Egal, Head of the Somali faction known as the United Somali People's Front, called for an armed, international intervention to put an end to a month of clan war in Mogadishu.

'No More Blood for Somali Wounded, Doctor Says', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 13 December 1991 (in English).

Extract:
Doctors carrying out emergency operations on civilians wounded in Somalia's factional fighting have run out of blood for transfusions, an official of the humanitarian organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said here Thursday. Thierry Durand, just back from the Somali capital Mogadishu, told AFP that the doctors there lacked medicaments and no longer had "a single litre of blood" for transfusion.
Around 4,000 civilians are believed to have been killed and 8,000 injured in the latest carnage, which broke out three weeks ago. Durand said that 1,000 litres of blood plasma had been used every day since the fighting erupted three weeks ago between rival clan-based factions of the ruling United Somali Congress (USC).
A ship chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was prevented on Tuesday from disembarking 800 tonnes of mainly medical and food aid in Mogadishu due to shelling of the port. Non-governmental organisations like MSF depend largely on shipments from the ICRC. "Up to now, the ICRC brought us 7,000 litres of plasma per week," Durand said. MSF has 33 tonnes of medicines waiting in the Kenyan port of Mombasa to be taken in an ICRC vessel to Mogadishu in the next few days [...]
Two members of the ICRC, a Belgian and a Somalian, received bullet wounds in Mogadishu on Wednesday and Durand affirmed: "The situation is far worse than in January" when President Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown. The relief worker added: "The old town has been wiped out."

'Somalia Needs International Intervention, says Faction Leader', **Reuters** (UK), Nairobi, 13 December 1991 (in English).

Extract:
"We can only find a united front of Somalis with international assistance. This will be the only way to stop the disintegration of the Somali state," Hashi Egal of the United Somali People's Front (USPF) told Reuters [...] Hashi Egal proposed that a military buffer zone be created in Mogadishu after a ceasefire in which all clan forces would withdraw from the city. Military intervention organised by the United Nations or the United States should follow if the truce fails, he added.

'French Doctors Put Latest Mogadishu Death Toll at Over 300', **Reuters** (UK), 28 November 1991 (in English).

Extract:
At least 300 people have been killed in the Somali capital Mogadishu since factional fighting resumed there 10 days ago, French doctors said on Thursday. "The death toll mounts hourly," said a statement by the French medical charity Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), whose doctors are treating wounded at three Mogadishu hospitals. It said 1,500 people had crammed the hospitals. Up to 3,000 others badly in need of medical care

were stranded in the north of the city, divided by the fighting [...] MSF said the clan fighting risked spreading to other parts of the impoverished and divided Horn of Africa country and appealed for international assistance for war victims.

On 11 December 1991, two employees, one from the ICRC and the other from the Somali Red Crescent, suffered severe gunshot wounds in Mogadishu during a meeting to organise a food distribution, dying in the following days. The ICRC called again for the respect of its medical mission.
On 15 December, Andrew Natsios, Director of the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), announced that the USA would double its emergency aid for Somalia. He strongly criticised the incapacity of the UN to deliver assistance to the civilian population of this war-ravaged country. In effect, since the evacuation of its teams in September, the UN has banned all movement of its personnel and planes into Somalia.
On 20 December, humanitarian aid flights recommenced for Mogadishu. The UN announced that it would finance ten of the 15; the European Union the other five.
On 27 December, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary General of the United Nations, announced the dispatch of a small team into Mogadishu, and the plan for progressive reinforcement of aid to the population.

'U.S. Increases Aid to Somalia After U.N. Balks', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Jane Perlez, Nairobi, 15 December 1991 (in English).

Extract:
The United States almost doubled its emergency aid for Somalia this week after the United Nations refused to organize significant assistance for the nearly 10,000 civilian casualties in the war-ravaged Somali capital, an American official said today.
The official, Andrew Natsios, Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, said that much of the extra $19 million allocated to Somalia would be spent on medical help, food and logistical support for humanitarian agencies working in and around Mogadishu, the capital.
He said the office had already spent $21 million on emergency assistance since a civil war in the East African country broke out again last month.
Mr Natsios said he had expressed disappointment to senior United Nations officials about the "failure to engage themselves" in efforts to help out in the Somali capital but had received little response. He said a United Nations plane that could deliver medical workers and supplies to Mogadishu was being been [sic] held in Nairobi because of the risks posed by the civil war. By contrast, the International Committee of the Red Cross flew a Hercules aircraft with six tons of medicines into Mogadishu today and will continue the Hercules flights daily for the next several days, a Red Cross official here, Grégoire Tavernier, said today [...]
Doctors and nurses from a handful of agencies are struggling in makeshift hospitals to treat the daily surge of badly wounded patients, the workers said. They are facing acute shortages of medical supplies, they said.
The East Africa Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, Mary Racelis, said she had tried to persuade the security office of the United Nations in New York to allow the United Nations plane and personnel to go to Mogadishu. But the office, which is

responsible for the safety of United Nations employees and equipment, would not be budged, she said.
A Red Cross worker was shot and severely wounded on Wednesday while organizing a distribution of food in Mogadishu. He was the first of about 40 foreign aid workers to be wounded in the city since the fighting erupted last month. They are the only foreigners left in the city. [...]
Mr. Natsios, the American relief official, said he had told senior United Nations officials that the security office was being "unreasonable" in not allowing the plane to fly. He said he had been shocked to learn that a United Nations official in New York had described Mogadishu as "unfit for humans" and said it was a "symbol" of that point of view to keep the United Nations plane out of Mogadishu. [...]
In addition to medical supplies, food for children is desperately needed in areas outside of Mogadishu where about 500,000 people from the city are thought to have fled, he said. The International Committee of the Red Cross had found severe malnutrition among 60 percent of the children in some areas, he said.
"There are the highest malnutrition rates in the world among those children," Mr. Natsios said. "All the kids who are severely malnourished are doomed unless Unicef and the World Food Program gets in there as well."

'Airlift to Somalia's Capital Begins as Strife Between Clans Continues', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Jane Perlez, Nairobi, 21 December 1991 (in English).

Extract:
A Belgian transport plane this week began an airlift of medical supplies and food to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, where fierce fighting has left more than 4,000 people dead and 10,000 wounded in the last month. With 18 tons of supplies on each of 15 planned flights, the airlift, which got under way on Thursday, is providing the first major infusion of badly needed supplies for wounded and starving civilians since the fighting broke out, aid officials said. But even with daily flights, the amount of humanitarian aid will fall far short of the 800 tons aboard a ship that the Red Cross has been prevented from unloading at Mogadishu because of incessant shelling of the Indian Ocean port, aid workers said.
After coming under heavy criticism from the United States for its lack of significant assistance to victims of the Somali fighting, most of whom are women and children, the United Nations said on Thursday that it was financing 10 of the 15 flights. The European Community is financing five of the flights, according to its official in charge of humanitarian assistance for Somalia, Trevor Walker [...]
The United Nations Childrens Fund made its first official statement about the fighting on Thursday, calling on the factions to "immediately stop hostilities and impose a cease-fire" that would enable emergency relief to reach the wounded and starving victims in Mogadishu [...] No United Nations relief worker has been in Mogadishu since the intense fighting erupted on Nov. 17, because it is too dangerous, United Nations officials said.

In December 1991 it was total war. There was a completely destructive wish against the people, the harvest, the fruit trees, the infrastructure... absolutely everything suffered it! The people no longer had any way of getting their food from here to there, to bring it in via the roads because it was really too dangerous and everything had been destroyed. During this period, Mogadishu was really impracticable. There was one MSF vehicle, one ICRC vehicle. That was it. Apart from the warmongers it was just these two vehicles

that moved around the city. We were easily identified by everyone. At the exit point for Mogadishu, there was a very dangerous intersection with a road that heads to Baidoa and another towards the south. Each time that we passed through there we tried not to shit ourselves. There were all these clans guarding the checkpoints for the different neighbourhoods. One of them, a particularly indecisive guy, didn't respect any of the parties to the conflict and you had to conduct quite complex negotiations to be able to leave the city.

Brigitte Doppler, MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; MSF France Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 5 January 1992, a shell hit Banaadir hospital, where an MSF team was working. On the same day, a doctor working for UNICEF was killed by bandits in the north of Somalia. The following day, MSF announced the withdrawal of five of its international staff from Somalia. The envoy of the UN Secretary General declared pessimism that a ceasefire could be obtained.

'For Security Reasons Médecins Sans Frontières is Recalling Part of its Team from Mogadishu', **Press Release**, MSF France, 6 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Due to the degradation of security conditions in Mogadishu, today Médecins Sans Frontières is recalling part of its teams from the Somali capital. This morning, five members of Médecins Sans Frontières arrived in Nairobi (Kenya). The organisation is keeping only the minimum medical and surgical personnel necessary to stay operational and to continue to deliver assistance to the many people wounded due to the fighting. If the security conditions see no improvement in the days to come, Médecins Sans Frontières will be forced to completely freeze its activities in Mogadishu. Recent events lead us to believe that the hospitals are being targeted by certain armed groups. On Sunday, a shell fell on Banaadir hospital, where an MSF team was working. Thankfully it did not explode. Despite the many steps taken to prevent numerous armed men entering the civilian hospitals where Médecins Sans Frontières works, they continue to carry their weapons inside.

Médecins Sans Frontières, present since January 1991 in the Somali capital, currently has teams in two hospitals in Mogadishu: Medina and Banaadir. Meanwhile, since the resurgence of fighting last November, the organisation supplies all the health structures in the city, on both sides of the frontline, with up to 80% of their medicines and medical material. In one part of the city more than 6,000 patients have been admitted into the hospitals since the beginning of the fighting, now almost two months old. The number of wounded in the other part of the city is probably the same. The number of deaths is impossible to calculate.

'UN Envoy Pessimistic over Chances for Peace in Somalia', **AFP** (France), 6 January 1992 (in English).

Extract:
U.N. Under Secretary General James Jonah said here Monday after a three-day visit to Somalia that "phenomenal" obstacles needed to be removed before the fighting could be halted in Mogadishu. "It's not totally impossible" to find a settlement to the crisis, Jonah told a news conference here, but "the obstacles standing in the way of peace in Mogadishu are phenomenal." [...] The U.N. envoy said the Somali crisis shaped up as "a most difficult problem for the Security Council to resolve". "The first objective should be to impose a lasting ceasefire in Mogadishu," he said.
Many Western aid organizations have pulled out of Somalia amid the deterioration in law and order. Martinka Pumpalova, 51, a Bulgarian doctor working for the U.N. Children's Fund UNICEF, was killed in northern Somalia on Sunday, apparently by bandits. Jonah said Monday that she was "murdered in cold blood." He added that two Somalis working for UNICEF who were wounded in the attack had been evacuated to Djibouti for medical treatment.
The private French humanitarian organization Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF, Doctors Without Borders) announced Monday that it was reducing its staff in Somalia "because of the unsafe conditions." It said five MSF workers arrived in Nairobi on Monday. Two members of the International Committee of the Red Cross were killed in Mogadishu in December.

On 14 January 1992, an ICRC employee was shot while travelling in an ICRC vehicle in Kismayo. He was the third member of the organisation to be killed in the space of one month.

'International Committee of the Red Cross Employee Killed in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 15 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
An employee of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was killed Tuesday in Kismayo, in the south of Somalia, announced ICRC on Wednesday, which brings to three the number of members of the organisation killed in a month in the country. Hassan Mohamed Ali, 60 years old, was hit by unspecified snipers while he was travelling in a vehicle carrying the symbol of the Red Cross, explained ICRC. ICRC condemned the killing, and indicated that it was currently in discussion with the rival factions about the continuation of its humanitarian aid operations. According to ICRC, the people in the Kismayo region, where ICRC is the sole humanitarian organisation present, lack food and medical care. "Sporadic fighting and increased tension have complicated medical and aid activities," said ICRC. The other charity organisations working in Mogadishu are equally critical of the growing difficulties they face in guaranteeing their activities.

On 15 January 1991, MSF Holland announced in a press release, subsequently re-issued by MSF France, that its team was pulling out of Burao in the north of Somalia, due to fighting between rival clans. The organisation declared that it feared it would have to withdraw the rest of its team in Mogadishu if the security conditions did not improve. In a second release, on 17 January, MSF announced that as part of its withdrawal from Burao, the team organised the transfer of 300 wounded patients and other emergency assistance to Sheikh and Oodweyne, nearby towns.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Evacuates from Burao for Security Reasons', **Press Release,** MSF France, 15 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Because fighting between rival clans started in Burao (north of the country), Médecins Sans Frontières has decided, for security reasons, to withdraw its team from the town. According to the members of Médecins Sans Frontières, the fighting is believed to have already generated hundreds of dead and wounded, with thousands of people leaving the town. The team, comprising a doctor, two nurses, a midwife, and a logistician, was evacuated to Sheikh, where it is providing medical aid to victims brought from Burao.
The Dutch section of Médecins Sans Frontières, which ran a primary healthcare programme in Burao, also has a team in Hargeisa. Médecins Sans Frontières has already been forced on 6 January last week to evacuate a part of its team from Mogadishu, for security reasons.

'MSF Does Not Want to Abandon the Somali Victims', **AFP** (France), 15 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), one of the few humanitarian organisations still present in Somalia, fears it will have to withdraw if the security conditions for its teams "do not improve in the coming days". MSF will be "forced to reduce or even completely freeze activities in Mogadishu", warned the organisation on Wednesday, when it also condemned international indifference [to Somalia]. Its teams on the ground have been reduced since 6 January from 13 to seven persons. [...]
In a report on its activities in Mogadishu, MSF gives figures of 5,000 dead and over 12,000 wounded patients received in health centres since mid-November. In the absence of any official census, these estimates come from the humanitarian teams and nursing staff, explains the organisation. Nearly 80 per cent of the injured treated in the two hospitals in which it operates – the Medina and Banaadir – are civilians, and of the over 2,000 surgeries, more than 1,800 operations are "heavy" (abdominal, thoracic, bone, or vascular). MSF also provides 80 per cent of medical materials, equipment, and medicines to all the health structures in the capital, sometimes hastily erected in houses, where it also installs surgical units.
On the other hand, ICRC provides most of the food available on the ground. In both cases, "the deliveries are made under more and more difficult conditions," says the organisation. "In a city where only weapons abound, doctors are often forced to work under threat of combatants who burst into the operating theatre. There are only two Somali orthopaedic surgeons and the anaesthetists can be counted on the fingers of one

hand," Dr Marc Gastellu[-Etchegorry], MSF Coordinator for Somalia, told AFP. "Mogadishu has been forgotten by the international community," he added.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Increases its Assistance in the North of Somalia', **Press Release,** MSF France, 20 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
While the fighting continues in the Burao area, Médecins Sans Frontières has decided to increase its aid in the north of Somalia. This weekend a team left for Oodweyne, 30 kilometres from Burao, which has been beset by interclan fighting for the past ten days. The Médecins Sans Frontières team, comprised of a coordinator, a doctor, and a nurse, is bringing medical aid to the refugee camps close to Oodweyne for the victims of the fighting in Burao. The majority of Burao's inhabitants have fled towards Sheikh and Oodweyne. There are more than 150 wounded people in the camps, a minority of them civilians, and between 200 and 500 people are estimated to have died during the exodus. On Monday, a Médecins Sans Frontières team was forced to leave Burao for Sheikh, where it provided medical assistance to the Burao wounded. Médecins Sans Frontières has been present in Somalia since 1985. The Dutch section of the organisation, which runs a primary healthcare programme in Burao, also has a team in Hargeisa. Medico-surgical teams from Médecins Sans Frontières also work in Mogadishu. From mid-January 1992, MSF France plans to partner with other organisations for a fresh communications campaign on Somalia, where the emergence of new clan players has only intensified the conflict and its consequences for the population.

Between December 1991 and February 1992, several meetings were held between senior MSF France representatives and the two war chiefs, Aidid and Ali Mahdi. The meetings made it possible to obtain tacit agreements on the conditions for banning weapons from the hospitals and for the security of the MSF team as it moved between the zones held by different factions.
A message reiterating the neutrality of Médecins Sans Frontières' activities and its hospitals was broadcast on the radio stations in Somalia.

'Update on the Current Situation in Somalia', **Memo,** MSF France, mid-January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
<u>Update on the situation in Somalia today:</u>
MSF reduced its team in Moga as of the end of last week (from 13 to seven people) because the security conditions for the team have still not improved.
1) the tacit agreements made between Rony and General Aidid in mid-December for weapons bans in the hospitals are still not adhered to.
2) Banaadir hospital became the target last week of a clan that may belong the Murosades (with a shell that didn't explode). ICRC has kept only five people in place, and SCF, three. François Jean [Director of Studies at the MSF France Foundation] is on the ground with two objectives:
1) sort out the team's internal problems

2) secure the demilitarisation of the hospitals where MSF works. General Aidid must put in place a police corps to step in and demilitarise these hospitals.
The fighting intensified on the weekend with a new clan entering the fray, from the Murosades who until now had remained relatively neutral. Apparently General Aidid's troops hit back, easily crushing the Murosade clan. It's understood that the other neutral clans did not react at all (and in particular the Abgaals). On 16 January, the port of Mogadishu was attacked by General Aidid and the Hawadle clan, pushing out the Ashamus clan. The fighting apparently only lasted a day, without any massive flows of wounded into the hospitals (the Abgaals don't seem to have reacted this time either). So, the conflict seems to be spreading, with the risk of the number of battles increasing but, in another sense, the disappearance of the neutral clans is leading to reduced pockets of resistance in Mogadishu. These pockets are most often the source of stray bullets.
In the south: On 14 January, an ICRC employee was killed in Kismayo while travelling in an ICRC vehicle (an incident which brings to three the number of the organisation's people killed within a month). The most probable hypothesis seems to be 'balancing of the accounts' between opposing clans. The target belonged to the Ogaden. Two clans are facing off in Kismayo: the Ogaden clan and a grouping of certain Darod clans, and the Hartis (Majeerteen, Dhulbahante, Warsangali). The Ogaden lost the battle and completely left the city. Apparently, the fighting has ceased since then. Everybody has agreed to organise a European [all-MSF] awareness-raising campaign on Somalia for the international community, to be able to contribute to the diplomatic efforts for a quick settlement in the conflict (a letter + press conference + CNN coverage in Somalia).

'Somalia Update', **Memo,** MSF France, 30 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Disarmament in the hospitals
After the meeting between François Jean and General Aidid in mid-January, armed men from the Habr Gedir clan were posted at the entrances of the hospitals where MSF works to disarm them before entering. The disarming of everybody present within the hospital began in reality on 20 January 1992. There is a clear decrease in arms in the hospital since this police corps was posted. Nonetheless, there are still some concerns worth putting forward.
- Might the armed guards create the risk that patients are filtered before they arrive at the hospital? (especially in terms of the Abgaals)?
- Who among the wounded not belonging to General Aidid's clan would be happy to present themselves at the hospital?
- Though we might gain in terms of NEUTRALITY (disarmament), might we not lose in terms of IMPARTIALITY (armed guards belong to the Aidid clan)?
It seems a bit early to make a call on this.

'Letter from Somalia', ***Messages*** no.45 (internal magazine of MSF France, also distributed to 100 journalists), François Jean, Director of Studies at the MSF France Foundation, January 1992 (in French).

Extract:

And always, everywhere, this to-and-fro of pick-ups [armed guards] bristling with machine guns, which are gradually weaving the fabric of this endless conflict. Mogadishu is emptying, abandoned by its inhabitants who flee the fighting to take refuge on the outskirts of the capital. The nomads are in the city with their weapons and clan logic. Good things come out of bad: this logic, even if not conducive to a political solution, carries its own rules and limitations. At least that's what one hopes, because deteriorating conflict could easily turn into uncontrolled gangs agitating against each other.

The fact remains that this clan logic, for us, means protection by a clan. This protection, essential as it is, could, if we do not take care, quickly become smothering. The line is thinly drawn, in the spirit of our 'protectors', between the concern for our security and the desire to monopolise our aid so that we can avoid any 'bad encounter' with the representatives of other clans. [...] Our team is well aware of this and spares no effort to be accessible to all, to assess needs independently and respond to them without any discrimination. This is why we regularly cross the frontlines to supply medical facilities on all sides in the same way, and we have been striving for several months to ensure that the hospitals be respected by the belligerents. Thus, we have secured guards to be placed at the entrance of the structures in which we work to disarm combatants. But neutrality should not prosper at the expense of impartiality: everything must be done so that the presence of these guards does not interfere with the free access to care for the wounded belonging to clans considered 'hostile'. Lastly, we are determined to take advantage of every moment of calm to assess the status of the people displaced on the periphery and to try to get assistance to them.

It is a difficult mission in Somalia, where the team must constantly balance its legitimate concerns about security and its overriding obligation of independence, neutrality and impartiality. It is also an essential mission in Somalia where, in the absence of any international presence apart from the ICRC and a handful of emergency organisations, Médecins Sans Frontières has been attempting for a year to maintain and expand a humanitarian space without which populations would be abandoned without recourse between war and famine.

Minutes of Meeting on the Horn of Africa, MSF Belgium, MSF France, and MSF Holland, 4 February 1992 (in English).

Extract:

Security for the MSF team has not been ok and even now there is a doubt about the neutrality of the guards that are in front of the hospital: does everybody get into hospital without a problem? There is still one reduced MSF team of 8 on the side of Haideed, while once a week they make a supply of drugs cross-line in Mogadishu. The team will remain reduced till serious security measures will be taken to guarantee the safety of the teams (!), but till now nothing better has been obtained. This is also the reason not to increase the present programmes and humanitarian aid, so that a kind of pressure is maintained on the people with the power.

Fax from Patrick Vial, MSF France Coordinator, to Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Programme Manager, 5 February 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Here's the announcement that I would like to have broadcast on the radio [...] What do you think? [...] Warmly, Patrick
Radio message
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is present in Mogadishu since the first week of January 91. Since more than one year, MSF is assuming a medical presence, with a surgical team in Mogadishu hospitals. MSF is also involved in drug supply to hospitals and dispensaries. After two and a half months of heavy fighting in Mogadishu, MSF would like to raise some points considered as essential.
The hospitals should be considered as neutral zones; this is valid for all of Mogadishu, for the north as well as the south of the town. For this reason, the hospitals are clearly marked with flags, either with white flags or with the flags of the Red Crescent or Red Cross. This means that those areas should not be shelled or taken as a target by anyone and that no military presence should remain in the vicinity of the hospitals.
The neutrality of the hospitals requires that there should be no weapons inside the hospitals; therefore boards announcing this message are present at the gates of the hospitals. Rooms to leave weapons are available at the gates of the hospitals. Hospitals and medical care should be accessible to everyone. The population of victims of armed conflict should be able to reach the hospitals and assistance should be given to them, irrespective of any political affiliation. The above-mentioned principles should be put into practice in all of Somalia and in each district of Mogadishu.
In the hope of better days, MSF thanks you for listening to our opinion.

'**Report** of Visit by Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry and Thierry Durand, Mogadishu, 17 February 1992-20 February 1992', 29 February 1992 (in French).

Extract:
MSF's transparency
The two belligerents were visited by MSF. Our fundamental approach was to reaffirm our neutrality on the side of Ali Mahdi and to underline the importance of our impartiality in our meeting with Aidid.
Due to the absence of information given upfront by the coordinator to Aidid's men and the confidential nature of a visit in a sensitive opposition zone, it was strongly insisted to Aidid that we be able to visit with medicines where we believe it necessary. Aidid based his argument on our security; we drew his attention to the fact that we are obliged to go to certain places and thus to take on the risks knowingly.
After consultation, it was agreed that MSF would remain the decision-maker regarding visits but would act openly. An official letter was received from the USC stipulating free passage for MSF's teams and its goods at checkpoints so that we can go where we wish (see Annex 1) [...]

Relations between local staff and expatriates
The management of local staff has been solidifying over the past months. The process has progressed bit by bit to avoid brutal changes, without disregarding the mission's history. Osman Ato will be consulted diplomatically to obtain his support in management of staff. Below is a potpourri of ideas and principles regarding the work attitude of the local staff and the relations between them and the expatriates.

There is a large disparity between the house staff and the medical staff. With all the staff asking for a salary increase for some time, Ramadan (at the beginning of March) will be seized as an opportunity to give a special bonus to everyone. The hospital team does not really get on well with the house staff. From another point of view one could question how the guards view the expatriates. There is probably a certain distance that has been established between the two groups of staff. But, there needs to be a certain closeness between them because a fractured relationship would be negative.
In recent weeks it's been evident there is a misalignment between how the coordinator views the [locally recruited] staff as compared to the [internationally mobile] team. This needs to be avoided. The trifecta of 'Information, Decision, Communication' lead by the coordinator will harmonise relations between the local and expatriate staff. It will be vital to make the local staff aware of their responsibilities. It is also necessary to remain vigilant regarding rumours, which could blow something small out of proportion, and to not make generalisations out of a particular case. To reiterate, it is vital to disseminate information in an objective way.
We have a tendency to develop a certain paranoia, which often results from things that are due to our own disorganisation. Digging one's heels in on details often leads to frustrations and a feeling that it's unmanageable; nonetheless, details shouldn't be ignored. Let's concentrate on the essentials, the details will resolve themselves subsequently. Blowing things out of proportion and being hemmed in, in a vicious cycle, needs to be compensated by some objectivity and an understanding of the Somali mentality. It is also necessary to be aware of the stressful situation in which our team lives after a year of war. Efforts to improve the atmosphere in which certain staff members work will be undertaken by the coordinator with the involvement of Faisal. There is no miracle remedy, it will be a lengthy process which will require attention and goodwill from everyone.

<u>Miscellaneous</u>
[...] Relocation. For practical (the high level of activity in Osman's workshop) and political reasons we have decided to relocate. I see the operation requiring two stages to avoid offending certain sensitive characters. The house itself will remain as a warehouse and logistics office for the time being and we will find a supplementary house to live in in the same neighbourhood, which remains one of the most stable in Mogadishu.

Osman Ato, the man who was helping us rent cars, find houses, find work premises, has become compromising for us because he's too closely linked to the Aidid clan. But we were already working with him, so the question became one of negotiating with Aidid. Patrick [Vial, MSF France coordinator in Somalia] and I went to meet Osman to discuss this. I went along to give a bit of institutional weight to things. We said to him that we were not bothered by the fact of working with a single clan, but we requested a totally pure commitment to allowing open access for all wounded to the hospital. In effect, the guards that were securing the hospital had, on repeated occasions, flagrantly refused entry to wounded people 'from the wrong side'. However, we got his agreement. When I went to visit Aidid, Patrick also organised a visit to Ali Mahdi. We advised when I would be passing through and obtained a ceasefire for that time and, several hours later, another for the return trip, and it was upheld.
Some months later in Baidoa, I experienced another incident that convinced me that having armed guards was not so stupid. At an armed checkpoint on the road, there was a very tense moment of discussion between our guards and the Baidoa guards, who didn't want to let us through. Tension mounted and the rifle bolts clicked into place. Where were we to dive for

cover when they began firing at each other when there were no visible means to protect ourselves? It lasted three to four minutes, but they were long minutes. Then things calmed down and five minutes later we're drinking tea, we were chatting, we put the Baidoa militia in our Mad Max, and they're the ones who got us into Baidoa.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

During the first months, it was the medical team that was going from the house to the hospital and from the hospital to the second hospital, where we also had a post-op service. The routes and the movements were extremely limited and thus easy to manage. We began to expose ourselves a little more, when a nurse had to go into what was called the Bermuda Triangle, an 'Abgaal' zone close to the Ali Mahdi clan but located right in the middle of the Aidid zone. They were armed to the teeth and there was no access to care. The nurse had to go there every three days. This was how we started to have movements outside of the house-hospital connection. So we exposed ourselves a little more but only after having made contact, and even I went numerous times to accompany the nurse. A special rapport was established between us, the MSF expatriates, and all the people who looked after our security, from our hospital staff to the armed guards. In my opinion, we succeeded in creating an organisational culture within which people identified themselves with MSF. They were proud of keeping the hospital secure so that we could do our work there. They took incredible risks for us. We were there throughout. We never left the Somalis like plenty of others had and it was greatly appreciated. This was obviously an aspect that contributed to our security. If you don't have a group bonded around you that will come to warn you when there is danger, you expose yourself in a serious way.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

We had many discussions with Aidid and Osman, and even if we were based in their area and protected by them, we still managed to work in other zones. We explained to them and they said to us that they didn't have a problem [with that] and that they understood completely. So we crossed the green line to take medicines to Ali Mahdi's people. It was our own guards, Aidid's men, who had organised the transfer. They took us through the buffer zone of the frontline, handed us over to the men of another, neutral clan, the Hawadle, and it was they who escorted us in no-man's land. And on the other side the Ali Mahdi people picked us up and we had our talk with Ali Mahdi, President of Somalia!

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Several weeks later, the issue of the relationships between humanitarian organisations and armed guards was broached in detail by Stephen Smith in the daily French newspaper, *Libération*. Certain senior members of MSF were deeply displeased by this article.

Fax from Paul Vermeulen, MSF Switzerland, to the managers in the other MSF sections, 3 March 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Hi everyone, I've just received a phone call [from ICRC's communication officer] who is also a friend of mine. He was surprised by the attached article. We considered the possibility of making a joint MSF-ICRC response. He's currently taking the temperature on his side. Marc, can you contact him and tell him what you think about this?

'Drugs and the Security of Foreigners, Mothers of the War in Somalia', Stephen Smith, ***Libération*** (France), 3 March 1992 (French).

Extract:
The image went around the world branded with the emblem of the Red Cross or whatever other humanitarian emblem, a vehicle belonging to the ICRC, the French NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the English Save the Children, or the American International Medical Corps (IMC), heads out on the streets of Mogadishu. Often you'll see armed men on board. In any case, the vehicle is always followed by another, heavily armed vehicle: a pick-up or a jeep, packed with fighters equipped with a canon or a heavy machine gun. It's 'security' which hires itself out – to the tune of 60 dollars per day. The food of these 'guards', and the vehicle's maintenance, repairs, and fuel, are charged to the client. At this price, they 'accompany' the smallest movement in the city, in a vehicle worthy of Mad Max.
Only the Austrian NGO, SOS Children's Villages, does without these services. Long established in the Somali capital, with a little orphanage and a little obstetric clinic, it relies, even in the violent anarchy of Mogadishu, on the respect of its 'humanitarian immunity'. The other NGOs judge that they do not have the same choice. Several of their colleagues, Somalis and foreigners, have been killed in public in the street. So as to not evacuate, they needed to protect themselves, they say.
Was it so necessary without exception to employ General Aidid's men? For this too, it seems there was no choice. The American NGO IMC [International Medical Corps] entrusted its security in the beginning to other 'fighters'. But under the pressure of this war of fortune, increasingly beneficial to the general, it ended up also calling on Aidid's militia. It was a case of choosing, as the others had, the strongest side. Unless General Aidid has become the strongest because the NGOs believe they have no choice.

Some journalists had begun to say that aid money was feeding the war. It was the hot topic. I'd seen MILAN [anti-tank guided] missiles and all sorts of heavy weaponry arrive… they weren't bought with the US$5000 that we gave Osman every two months!

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Meanwhile at MSF France headquarters, a new manager took over the Somalia programme. She completely disagreed with the policy followed in the field, in particular the policy to use armed guards, and she suggested that the mission be closed as it was too dangerous. She was taken off the programme and, until a new manager was appointed, the deputy director of operations took over, on top of his other duties.

Communication between the field and headquarters at the time was in an extremely poor state. I must have had three different programme managers. The programme manager came for a visit and left horrified, saying the mission should be closed down. She was completely out of synch with what we were experiencing on the ground. The circumstances were difficult and we were under constant stress. I realised, in retrospect, that there wasn't really a dialogue between the field and Paris. The Operations department in Paris was in complete disagreement with the approach that we had taken to be able to work in such a dangerous context; that is, using armed guards. I had very little in terms of a relationship with headquarters but I had a very close one with the Nairobi team, which had more frequent communications with headquarters. In Mogadishu, we were in our own microcosm, in our own Somali universe, and we had very little interaction with headquarters.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

In the beginning they gave Kenya to this new programme manager, which was an enormous and difficult programme with the camps and Kenya as a whole and Somalia. She was too young, too new, too naive, too much a doctor for such a political context. She was a good girl but she was a bit too swallowed up by it all. Thankfully Marc Gastellu was able to bridge the link, fill in the gaps, and mend the problems.

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Effectively we had a programme manager who didn't feel comfortable with the situation. She was an extraordinary woman. But [Somalia] wasn't for her. Getting the right person for the job is essential in this type of programme. You can't get it wrong. All this contributed to our eventual reaction, displaying the tough side of MSF in this case, which seems ridiculous when you look at things retrospectively.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 23 January 1992, the United Nations Security Council imposed an arms embargo and, on February 14, the two principal parties to the conflict agreed to a ceasefire, which only held for a few days. The international press reported on the situation of famished civilians and the impossibility of getting help to them due to the insecurity.

'Somalia: Fresh Attempt at a Ceasefire in Devastated Mogadishu One Year After the Fall of President Barre', ***Le Monde*** (France), Jean Hélène, 30 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The general consensus is that the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council on 23 January is unlikely to bring an end to the fighting.[...]

The starving population has managed to find a little hope in spite of their ordeal. After a clash, the independent militia known as the Ashamuds, which had control of the port, suddenly opened the gates on 17 January and let people raid the warehouses: 7,000 tonnes of food thus appeared in the markets, dropping the price of a sack of flour from US$40 to US$5. The following day, two boats chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) berthed in two little ports to the north and south of the capital and unloaded 1,700 tonnes of food and medicines for 250,000 people who have sought refuge on the periphery of Mogadishu.
But there is an entire country needing assistance. In Kismayo, in the south, where close to 100,000 Somalis await food aid, tribal rivalries are blocking all distribution. The ICRC also needs to contemplate humanitarian deliveries into all the ports on the Somali coast to reach the hinterland. In the northern part of Mogadishu last week, ICRC opened a hospital, the only one in the area, within the buildings of an old prison. Across the way, Médecins Sans Frontières has maintained an emergency surgical team on the ground for a year.

'Somalia: St. Valentine's Massacre', ***The Economist*** (UK), Special Correspondent in Mogadishu, 22 February 1992 (in English).

Extract:
One of the chieftains, General Mohamed Farah Aydeed, exploited the distraction of the ceasefire talks to try to overrun his rival's positions in north Mogadishu. Somalia's 'interim President', Ali Mahdi Mohamed, repelled the attack. Civilians, once again were the victims.
More than 25,000 people have been killed or wounded in three months of fighting. No less than 250,000 Mogadishans – one in eight – have been forced from their homes. [...]
The city is split into armed camps. Boy warriors, stoned on mirah, the local narcotic, roam Mogadishu heavily armed. Their weapon of choice is a 106mm recoilless rifle mounted on the back of a jeep. Other favourites are rocket launchers and anti-aircraft guns. One group has the cannon and rocket pod from a jet fighter bolted to the Aoorofa truck. Somali children know as much about weapons as western children know about computer games. General Ibrahim Mohamed, who heads a peace committee of neutral clans, says the young fighters "have no human feeling; there is complete anarchy, they are out of control."
Unarmed civilians are at the mercy of marauding gangs, caught in the indiscriminate shelling and random gunfire. On a bad day the three official hospitals in Mogadishu (which lie in General Aydeed's fief) take upwards of 250 casualties. In Mr Mahdi's area, similar numbers are treated in houses converted into emergency operating theatres, wards, and dispensaries. Doctors work unpaid, on 24-hour shifts, patching up shattered bodies.
Hunger is universal! The war and the 1990 drought forced farmers to kill or sell their livestock and eat the seed grain needed for this year's sowing. The anarchy of the city

makes it almost impossible for relief workers to hand out food; the most they can do is to distribute a little medicine, and fuel for the water pumps. Food in Mogadishu is priced beyond the reach of most families; they have had no wages coming in for over a year. Many make do with one meal every two days. Over half the children are malnourished. Outside the capital, some things are even worse; famine is already striking nomads in central Somalia. The Red Cross is preparing to deliver food to five towns along the coast. But while the mad dogs fight on, there is little hope of relief.

On 30 January 1991, the general director of MSF Holland and the MSF France deputy director of operations held a press conference at the United Nations headquarters in New York and spoke out about the impact of the conflict on the Somali people. In the press kit, MSF gave estimates of 5,000 dead, with 15,000 wounded cared for by the organisation since mid-November.
The decision to speak out was taken by the directors of operations in light of the exacerbation of fighting following the visit of the UN secretary general's special representative to Somalia, and the refusal by Aidid of any external intervention. MSF hoped to speak out on the "situation" and "call on the international community to find a solution".
In a series of informal meetings with UN representatives, who broke the news of a plan for a massive aid effort for the Horn of Africa, the two MSF delegates emphasised the possible dangerous consequences of poor preparation for such an operation.

'Update on the Current Situation in Somalia', **Memo,** MSF France, mid-January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Rony [Brauman] is planning a communication activity for Somalia. Two possibilities:
• Denounce the international community for its absence of aid (e.g. Malawi), and the practices and the abuses of the governments with which we work (e.g. Ethiopia in 85).
• Raise awareness and rally international opinion about the necessity of a rapid settlement for the conflict.
It's this second approach that we can imagine for Somalia, by insisting on the impossibility of shipping in international aid, an additional contribution of food only likely to worsen the climate of violence that already exists. Such international pressure has to be seen as an act of mediation with a view to a ceasefire. MSF and more specifically all the European sections could write a letter which could be proposed for co-signing by ICRC and SCF. We would carry much more weight if we succeeded in uniting with ICRC and SCF for a joint declaration that we could then send to OAU [Organization of African Unity], the Arab League, the UN, political representations... But, would this be possible soon with ICRC? Would we find common ground on the fundamental issues behind this declaration? Rony is sceptical. Either way, something has to be done, quickly, with a significant commitment from MSF. We could plan a press conference in New York, also in Brussels and perhaps in Nairobi. Marc informs us that SOS Children's Villages, an NGO present in Somalia, made a proposal launching the idea of an intervention by a military-humanitarian force which would enable the establishment of 'humanitarian corridors'. This proposal will be rejected by Aidid for sure, all the more because a ceasefire is a must before

peacekeeping by the international and external troops can proceed. Anyway, Aidid has already refused UN proposals for an intervention by the Blue Helmets, or by the OAU.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Speaks Out on the Situation in Somalia', **Press Release,** MSF France, No. 4/92, 29 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
In a press conference to be held on Thursday, 30 January 1992 from 11 am to 3 pm, in the United Nations headquarters in New York, Médecins Sans Frontières will speak out about the tragic situation prevailing in Somalia for the past year and the difficulty for humanitarian organisations to provide aid to the victims of the fighting.
Médecins Sans Frontières has been working since January 1991 in the Somali capital, Mogadishu; in the north of the country (Burao, Hargeisa); and caring for Somali refugees in Ethiopia (Ogaden). Since January last year, 110 members of Médecins Sans Frontières have taken their turn working in Mogadishu to care for the civilian victims of fighting, running surgical projects, and supplying medicines, medical equipment, and materials to almost all the health structures of the capital. Meanwhile, 14 members of Médecins Sans Frontières are currently in the Somali north, in Burao, Sheikh, Odweyne, and Hargeisa, where armed attacks re-emerged mid-January. In Ethiopia (Ogaden), Médecins Sans Frontières provides medical and surgical aid to 300,000 Somali refugees who are living in an extremely precarious situation in camps close to the border. Lastly, Médecins Sans Frontières is getting ready to send five members to assist the refugees in Kenya.

'Médecins Sans Frontières – Humanitarian Emergency in Somalia', **Press Briefing Notes,** MSF France, January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Numbers of wounded and deceased since the restart of fighting (data for the three principal hospitals in the western part of the city). Admissions to emergency: 9,386; Surgical procedures: 2,250 (16/11/91 to 24/01/92 and 16/11/91 to 02/01/92, respectively). Around 80% of the wounded cared for by Médecins Sans Frontières are civilians. Of the 2,000 surgical operations undertaken, more than 1,800 are heavy surgery. Of significance, they comprised around 50% laparotomies, 25% thoracic drainage, and around 10% bone or vascular surgery. The exact number of wounded treated in the part of the city held by President Ali Mahdi is, in fact, unknown. However, according to the estimates of the humanitarian teams and the health workers, it would be close to the same as the west of the city. Thus it can be estimated that the number of wounded received in the health centres would exceed 15,000 since mid-November. The number of deceased is impossible to establish precisely in the absence of any official census. The teams, however, estimate it could be around 5,000.

'UN Press Conference: Situation in Mogadishu', **Speech** by Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Deputy Director of Operations, 30 January 1992 (in English).

Extract:
I would like to bear witness to the disastrous situation in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, or should I say, the former capital. Indeed, the city has been devastated by the

fighting, which has been going on for a year now. The latest combats [fighting], which started three months ago, have finished the destruction of whatever remained. Random shelling [is falling] over the center of Mogadishu, now in ruins and [is] under the crossfire of armed forces and pillagers. More than half of the population has fled to neighboring countries to try and find some security. Médecins Sans Frontières has been present for a year now, assisting the victims of the ceaseless combats [fighting]. We arrived in Mogadishu on the 7th of January 1991, while the last foreigners were leaving the city. At this time, the fights between USC and the Siaad Barre troops were raging.

We worked in the Digfeer hospital and had to evacuate Mogadishu for reasons of security (2 members of the team were injured by bullets). A second team arrived a few days later and worked in the SOS [Children's Villages] hospital. Unfortunately, immediately after Siaad Barre's departure, this team met with severe security problems and was forced once again to leave Mogadishu temporarily. Three days later (beginning of February) we were back. MSF teams have been permanently present in the capital since this time, coping with emergencies and rehabilitating the health structures.

At the beginning of February, everybody was hoping for peace and tranquility. In Mogadishu, a kind of normal life started again, people who had fled came back. A government composed of several clans but recognized by none of the Somali groups nor any foreign country was chosen by the political wing of the U.S.C. This hope [for peace] was squashed very quickly with the battle of Afgoye. At this time, we were working in the Medina hospital. This was the only hospital which had not been looted. The other ones were totally devastated; all the items which had not been looted had been systematically destroyed, like the city itself.

The number of casualties was very important [large], I remember, some days we received more than 100 injured patients. They came from the different frontlines (and sometimes they had to wait for several days to be transported) or from the city because of weapons accidents or killings by the looters. There were also a lot of car accidents. We thought that the situation could not be worse, we were wrong. Because of the looters, we had to be escorted [by armed men] and we asked for some [armed] guards for the hospitals. There were so many weapons that the security of the patients, of the health staff and our security was really not guaranteed.

Step by step we succeeded to help the Benadir and the Digfeer hospital to start their activities again: we provided them drugs and surgical materials, [and] we repaired the electricity and the water systems. In June, the fighting decreased and these hospitals could cope with the emergencies. So we could supply to the peripheral health structures, from Belet Huen [Beledweyne] in the north of Mogadishu to Baidoa in the south, giving the means to treat patients and trying to restore what we could call the normal activities. Very often, during the war crimes, people forget that children die because of diarrhea and measles. It was very important, as well, to show to the population that they were not totally forgotten. Many doctors and authorities who worked hard to restore a 'normal life' had (and still have) the feeling that they were (and they are) abandoned by what they call the outside world. Because of this kind of stability [recent peace], we could evaluate the number of chronic orthopaedic patients. We counted more than 600 open fractures, with very often chronic infections, which had to be operated again. We started a new programme, operating on the patients who wanted to be operated on and who [had a chance for success] could be operated. Unfortunately, the worst was yet to occur. The first clash between the political and the military wings (Ali Mahdi / Hawiye Abgall and the General Aidid / Hawiye Abr Gedir ['Habre Guedir']) occurred in June, followed by three days [of] fights in September. At this time, we counted more than 3,000 casualties and around 500 deaths were estimated.

The tension increased and the war [re]started on the 17th of November. During the first days, the fights scattered around the city, were very heavy. Many civilians were trapped in the city and many of them were injured or killed. A front line appeared, located in the northeast and did not stop fighting since these days. Neutral clans tried to mediate but they all failed and step by step these clans have been swept along by the current of the war. As soon as the fighting began, we stopped our normal activities, facing the huge number of casualties. Most of them are civilians with very severe lesions, which need difficult treatments.
The Medina hospital has 125 beds, at this time 300 patients are hospitalized inside and 300 outside. Every day, cars, lorries unload their freight of patients, those who could wait, those who could survive.
The work conditions are very difficult, the city is a nightmare for the civilians and the humanitarian teams but it is a paradise for the pillagers. We travel only with heavily armed escorts. Three weeks ago, a shell fell in the Benadir hospital, nearby a Médecins sans Frontières nurse, fortunately it did not blow up. Stray bullets fell every day in the hospitals and some patients who had been operated were again injured in the hospitals. Two weeks ago, a machine gun bullet fell in the theater nearby the surgeon. We have been lucky in Mogadishu, but unfortunately some humanitarian members lost their lives, trying to provide some help to the population.
It is always difficult to report the reality. How can I find the right words to describe the eyes of the mothers while their children are dying, the shots, the blood of the patients who wait, lying down in front of the theater, waiting for the surgical team? How could I describe the despair? I can give you some figures: in Medina, Benadir and Digfeer Hospitals more than 9,500 casualties have been admitted since the beginning of the fights. The number is roughly the same in other parts of the city. We estimate around 5,000 deaths. In the Medina Hospital where we work, we receive between 20 and 100 casualties per day. On average 20 major operations are performed per day.
We negotiate the right to cross the front line and we supply drugs and medical materials on both sides. This represents around 80% of the drugs supplied in all the health structures. We want to keep our neutrality and the security of the patients and the humanitarian teams; that is why we asked again for guards in front of the hospitals in order to remove the weapons. We want to permit good access to the hospitals for all patients from all parties from all clans which live here. The Mogadishu population is normally around 1 million inhabitants. Half of the population fled into neighbouring areas of the city. There is a crucial lack of food and water. In the markets, the rare available food is very expensive. Any food convoy is very dangerous. At this time, the fighting continues but is decreasing and it seems that there is new hope for a ceasefire.
As Jacques [de Milliano] said, we do not have any concrete solution, we are not politicians, we just want to bear witness to this situation. We want to pass this message to the public, to the international community. A lot of people in Somalia want a normal life, they want to live and to work, they are looking to the outside world, so far…. They hope and we hope that it will awake.

'Report on Visit to New York, 29-01-92 to 02-02-1992', Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Deputy Director of Operations (in French).

Extract:
Objectives
The objectives of this visit were very simple: to speak out on the situation in Somalia and particularly Mogadishu. The chosen date and place presented an opportunity: a meeting

of the Security Council at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 31.01.92. It was decided to limit our involvement to speaking out so as not to create confusion with any political endeavours, due to the potential of our action being interpreted as interference by some of the parties involved, and the danger that that would represent for us.

History

The idea of communicating on Somalia is not a recent one, and there have been numerous and repeated instances of speaking out so far. But after a year of war, these have been measly efforts in light of the tragic situation that has prevailed in the country. This feeble record was broached towards the end of the international meeting on operations (held in Melun [in France] 12.01.92) and it was decided to undertake an international campaign to:

- speak out on the situation
- call on the international community to try to find a solution.

The visit by James Jonah to Mogadishu and the analysis of its outcomes called into question the initial objectives of the campaign, those outcomes including:

- the exacerbation of fighting after his visit
- hospitals under fire
- the refusal of General Aidid to step in, declaring that any external intervention would only complicate the political state of play. Because he feels superior militarily he can only lose ground with such an intervention, which could legitimise Ali Mahdi under his title as President. It should be noted at the same time that the constraints imposed by Aidid (barrage of fire when Jonah wanted to cross the frontline) and his manipulation of the visit (plane landing at an airport controlled solely by Aidid) were very poorly received by certain clans [...]

We had an official meeting in the pm with [the deputy secretary of the United Nations]. Three important points:

[He] doesn't like us and he let us know that by yawning exaggeratedly and leaving the discussion hastily.

His assistant and he himself reacted poorly to our response regarding the UN's actions in the past and future (to come during the conference). We had replied that there had been practically no action from the UN in the past and that we would hope for some in the future. Our explanation was well made.

The UN is planning massive aid for the Horn of Africa. During the course of the discussion (and during the press conference) we underlined the dangers of any aid that was poorly prepared:

- Political requisitioning of the aid
- Difficulty to reach the populations most affected – life-threatening danger for the Somalis and the humanitarian teams.

We also met the Dutch delegate to the United Nations. It was a good meeting, which above all addressed humanitarian action and politics and coordination with the UN, with a few words on the subject of Somalia. In the days that followed: interviews (*Newsweek* and CBS [Columbia Broadcasting Station]), then the recruitment meeting and operational planning.

Comments and conclusion:

All went well. The New York office's organisation was excellent and the results are already positive.

On 31 January 1991, the secretary general of the UN and the director general of UNICEF launched an appeal for emergency humanitarian aid for the people of the Horn of Africa "hit hard by the effects of the civil war, the repeated droughts, or the famine". Somalia found itself third in line, after Ethiopia and Sudan, when the funds were distributed.

'Urgent Appeal by UN for the People of the Horn of Africa', **AFP** (France), Paris, 31 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The secretary general of the UN and the director general of UNICEF launched an appeal on Thursday for emergency humanitarian aid to the people of the Horn of Africa, estimating the sum of US$621.6 million necessary for the next six months, UNICEF announced on Wednesday. Some 23 million people, 7 million of them displaced within their own country, are "directly threatened" in Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia by the effects of civil war, repeated drought, or famine, says UNICEF, stressing that "among the deprived, children are always the first victims."
The UN International Children's Emergency Fund will participate in the emergency funding to the tune of US$60.1 million (331.6 million [French] francs), which will be allocated to the purchase of medical necessities, food, water supply equipment, and shelter construction. Once the total funds have been received, they will be distributed, UNICEF explains, as US$19.9 million (109.4 million francs) for Sudan, US$18.4m (101.2m FF) for Ethiopia, US$11m (60.5m FF) for Somalia, US$10.3m (56.6m FF) for Eritrea, and US$0.5m (2.77m FF) for Djibouti.

At the beginning of February 1991, an MSF France team opened a programme in the Somali refugee camp in Liboi, Kenya. In Kenya, as in Ethiopia, the Somali refugees were forced to survive in an extremely precarious situation because the Kenyan authorities had been blocking aid interventions for a year.

'Rebel Victory in Somalia', ***Le Monde*** (France), Jean Hélène, Nairobi, 29 January 1991 (in French).

Extract:
In the south, on the Kenyan border, another 'humanitarian front' has been opened for aid to reach some 30,000 Somali refugees, of whom two-thirds are waiting near Mandera, in the no-man's land on the border, for the Kenyan government to allow the establishment of reception camps. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, assisted by Médecins Sans Frontières, is undertaking an evaluation mission of the sites chosen by the Nairobi authorities but is already preoccupied with the very sensitive issue of cohabitation of people from all sides, including opponents of the regime and members of the president's clan. At the same time, as it appeals to its citizens to offer solidarity and a welcome, the Kenyan government has suggested to donors that they provide proof of their generosity. But time is not on their side; the Somali "chifta" (bandit) gangs who laid waste to the northeast in the [19]70s have left bad memories here, and to avoid fresh unrest, the police have received the order to disarm all the refugees who cross the border.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 31 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Kenya: a team has departed to look after the Somali refugees (72,000 people), whose management by a Somali NGO has proven unsatisfactory.

'The Long Somali Exodus', ***Messages*** no. 47 (internal magazine of MSF France, also distributed to 100 journalists), Anne Fouchard, Communications Officer, MSF France, March 1992 (in French).

Extract:
From January 1991, as the battles which would end in the fall of Siad Barre intensified, a growing number of Somalis left their homes and their land. The number of people displaced within Somalia's borders was estimated from 300,000 to 500,000. Others fled to Ethiopia and Kenya. They are living in these two countries in precarious conditions. In Ethiopia there are around 300,000 refugees. Between June and November 1991, 150,000 people have found their way back to Somalia, to the extent that the security conditions have allowed. These return journeys have completely stopped since then. Today, the security conditions in the Hararghe (Ogaden) region have gradually deteriorated and delivering humanitarian assistance to the Somali refugees in the camps has become extremely difficult.
The refugees are spread across six main camps:
Teferi Ber and Dawanaji: The population of these camps is estimated at 120,000 people, principally Somali refugees but also Ethiopians previously living as refugees in Somalia.
Aysha: Approximately 15,000 Somalis, mostly Isaaqs.
Hartisheik A and B: This camp, mostly inhabited by Somali Isaaqs, is estimated to host 150,000 people (at January 1992).
Aware: Three camps in the surrounding area of Aware are estimated to have 60,000 refugees, principally Isaaqs and Darods. Access to these camps is difficult, sometimes impossible, due to the security conditions. The road is dangerous and the irregular and insufficient supply of food and water is affected by this. There is a constant flow of Somali refugees in Kenya from one border to another.
At Liboi (15 km from the Somali border), the official number of refugees today is 55,000-60,000. They are Somalis, mostly Darods. They have constructed traditional shelters close to the Liboi road and live in a very precarious situation. They have access to three litres of water per person per day. MSF has taken charge of medical assistance and sanitation for the refugees.
Ifo: A number of refugees from Liboi are currently being transferred (around 150 individuals per day) to this site, which is a day and a half by road from Liboi. Today, the new camp has 12,000 people. But the sanitary conditions and water supply are still extremely fragile.
Mandera: This site has 30,000 Somali refugees, a majority of them former Ethiopian refugees in Somalia.
Mombasa: Around 10,000 Somali refugees have settled in Utange, located 15 km from Mombasa.

At the beginning of 1991 we thought we could open activities in Mandera. It's right in the north at the three borders of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya. We do an explo [exploratory mission] and put a team in with vehicles. There are not camps with any structure. The refugees stay there cornered in a no-man's land between the two borders [with Somalia and Ethiopia]. Things fall apart quickly. Within a fortnight, we realise that the Kenyan authorities are in the process of blocking the camps off, and they put in place more and more administrative barriers for us. There are enormous numbers of Kenyans in Somalia and at the time, everything that has been looted in Mogadishu is starting to come in across these borders: televisions, goods from diplomatic residences, etc. On top of this, UNHCR is not operational in Kenya. There is just an office with a representative who looks after questions of protection in a third country. When the Somalis start crossing the border, Kenya imposes a Kenyan organisation to deal with them, so MSF stands back. The Kenyan organisation works, but doesn't cope. After six or eight months, the mortality is worse than in the camps in Somalia, and that starts to become common knowledge. For UNHCR, it's untenable. They get into an arm wrestle with the Kenyan government to replace the Kenyan organisation with MSF. I tell them, 'The day after your green light, there'll be a charter on its way with a full team.' This is how we went into the camps and started working.

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

II. FAMINE ALERT

Since opening a year earlier, the MSF mission in Somalia focused almost exclusively on the care of war-wounded in Mogadishu, and on a specialised orthopaedic programme. For safety reasons, the international staff were confined to the hospital and came out only to go to the house by car. Thus they had a limited view of the health status of people living in and around the capital. Only the coordinator moved around town to negotiate with all stakeholders to ensure security for the mission.
However, for several months, through the national staff, the team received very alarming information on the food and nutrition situation throughout the country, which was confirmed by Somali refugees arriving in the Kenyan camps.
The subject of a possible nutritional survey was regularly broached. But the insecurity prevented movement out of Mogadishu, whether to investigate or to conduct an intervention.

Fax from Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Programme Manager, to programme managers for MSF Belgium and MSF Holland, 27 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
In light of the famine-related problems in Mogadishu's displaced population, which numbers around 300,000, we are also planning a nutritional assessment as soon as possible.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 30 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: the fighting seems to be calming down but there are two persistent pockets. A team of two is ready to evaluate the situation of the displaced people around Moga (Serge Manoncourt can visit for a rapid assessment).

I went to Mogadishu for the first time in December 1991 for the war surgery programme. MSF was also supplying 18 health structures on the outskirts of the city. The health workers took a risk coming to us for medicines, and they made pretty alarming comments on the nutritional state of the people outside the city. In the hospital, we were starting to receive malnourished patients, wounded people who were not in a good state overall. There was no rice left on the local market, we were bringing in rice from Nairobi to pay our staff. They didn't want money, they wanted rice. This became common knowledge and everyone was very worried. The people that we were working with talked about it non-stop. They said to us, 'You know, outside of Mogadishu there is really nothing more to eat.' It's a pretty typical situation after a war. But it was the seriousness of the situation, in this case, that no one was managing to gauge. We wanted to do an assessment from December [19]91, but couldn't due to security issues, and when I returned to Paris, in January 1992, you could see that Jean Rigal, the Medical Director, and Serge Manoncourt from Epicentre, were waiting for the moment when they could.

Brigitte Doppler, MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; MSF France Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

I went to Somalia precisely because we were starting to hear talk of famine. On the one hand, the refugees arriving in Kenya were reporting to us what was happening, and on the other hand, the ICRC had already issued an alert. In Mogadishu the climate of insecurity weighed heavily. The team was being regularly threatened inside the hospital by men who would arrive and say, 'Either you operate on my brother immediately or I'll kill you,' etc. The expatriates were going to and fro by car between the hospital and compound, which were 200 metres from each other, and saw nothing. I did this journey twice on foot. I was carrying in my head what Brigitte Vasset [MSF France Director of Operations] had explained to us: 'Famine, you can see it.' And what I was seeing was really a famine. Then I went to Kismayo by plane with Patrick Vial, the Head of Mission. I saw the corpses of camels the whole length of the road between the airport and the town. The food situation was incredibly bad.

Anne Fouchard, MSF France, Communications Officer, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

The team was hesitating, not because it didn't believe in the famine – we were all on the same wavelength – but because it believed that the risks were too high to do a proper investigation, and that it would require negotiations, a range of contacts, an

undertaking that was too complex for a result that would be too unpredictable and too uncertain.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Meanwhile, from mid-January 1991, the ICRC was issuing alerts on the nutritional situation of the people in the camps located outside Mogadishu, and organised food deliveries and wet kitchens, which everyone recognised as useful. Yet it remained largely insufficient to deal with the extent of the need and faced security risks.

'Hundreds of Thousands of Somali Famine Victims According to the Red Cross', **AFP** *(France)*, 16 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Hundreds of thousands of Somali civilians fleeing the fighting, which plays out in the capital Mogadishu, are now victims of famine within the camps on the outskirts, said a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Thursday.
"The first deaths due to malnutrition have been registered in the camps," in Merca, approximately 80 kilometres south of Mogadishu, and Afgoye (40 kilometres west of Mogadishu), declared Mr Grégoire Tavernier to AFP in Nairobi.
Mr Tavernier, who is in contact with Somalia via satellite phone, indicated that it would be impossible to specify the exact number of people who had died of hunger in these camps.
More than 250,000 people have sought shelter in the camps, fleeing the fighting which has been raging in the capital since 17 November, between the rival factions of the United Somali Congress (USC). The toll is at least 4,000 dead and 8,000 wounded.

'Somalia **Update**', MSF France, 30 January 1992 (in French).

Extract:
4) ICRC activities: According to Dominique, the ICRC Coordinator in Mogadishu, food convoys are conducted in a constant situation of total insecurity. ICRC again unloaded two boatloads of food for the people displaced around Moga. Delivery to the planned locations was managed without any big problems. ICRC's current policy seems to be to entrust the food to the elders, who look after the transport and distribution. ICRC supports this logistically (trucks, fuel) if required. At the end of last week, ICRC distributed food to four hospitals in Moga: the Medina, Banaadir, Digfer, and the military hospital (10 tonnes for each).
5) Mogadishu port: Having fallen into the hands of General Aidid on 16 January, the port was opened up to the civilian population, which allowed them to take possession of 8,000 tonnes of food that had been stored by CARE inside the port (flour, rice...).
Looting or self-service? It seems that the civilians helped themselves to the food without many problems, and this reduced the tensions around food (before the looting, one sack

of flour was worth 250,000 SHS [Somali shillings, a sum equivalent to US$50 at the time], then the price fell to 30,000 SHS [US$6], and is now 150,000 SHS [US$30]).

Minutes of the Horn of Africa Meeting, 4 February 1992 (in English).

Extract:
ICRC is going on with the food supply and 1 team is organizing a hospital in an old jail on the Ali Mahdi territory at 15 minutes from the city. 4,000,000 (?) people fled the city and are now staying in the surroundings, deprived from food and health services. There could be done a combined action with ICRC, SCF, and MSF for this population.

Like ICRC, we knew that the people in and around Mogadishu were starving. The ICRC had chosen to look after the adults, because people no longer had charcoal [to cook], or the strength to feed themselves. The ICRC organised wet kitchens, where it served hot meals for everybody. It also tried to open one in Mogadishu, but the security constraints were such that it wasn't possible, either for the civilians to go into the city, or for the humanitarian workers to step out of it. It was too dangerous.

Brigitte Doppler, MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; MSF France Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

At the end of February 1992, the programme manager of MSF Belgium led an exploratory mission, accompanied by two MSF France international staff, in the Merca region, 100 kilometres or so from Mogadishu. The team discovered a catastrophic situation there. The team then pushed on to Kismayo, already the subject of an exploratory mission in December, where the situation was equally dramatic. The hospital no longer functioned at all.

'**Report** of Visit by Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry and Thierry Durand, Mogadishu, 17 February 1992-20 February 1992', 29 February 1992 (in French).

[The programme manager of MSF Belgium] will come for an assessment mission from 22/02 to 02/03. All necessary assistance is to be given to him. However, there needs to be strong coordination around him and a common policy for obvious security reasons, and in addition, good collaboration with the other organisations on the ground.

'Medico-Nutritional Emergency Aid to the War-Affected Population of Kismayo and Merca, Somalia, **Report**, [by] Project Manager, Horn of Africa', MSF Belgium, 3 March 1992 (in English).

Extract:
However, ambushes do happen at about 15 kilometres out of the city and it is considered to be extremely dangerous and life threatening to make these displacements [movements].
Every day, displaced people continue to arrive in a very bad nutritional and health condition. Their number is difficult to estimate, but one could consider their present number to be of about 60,000, of which 70 % are lodging with relatives.
Two small camps also exist in the city, all together a population of 4,000 people. A rough estimation makes us say that about 15,000 other displaced people are wandering around in the city, not knowing what to do or where to live from.
Every day about 50 to 100 non-displaced people present themselves to the 2 displaced camps to receive humanitarian assistance. Unfortunately, they all have to be refused the entry as the situation in these 2 camps is very precarious:
• One of the camps has a population of mainly women and children (1,300 in total presently), with 60% of the population under 3 years old, of which 90% are malnourished!!!
• One child is dying every 2 days, which brings the camp mortality at about 4/10,000/day! [...] Forty percent of the children suffer from a certain degree of malnutrition.
• Wells are still being dug and latrines installed, but the sanitation situation should still be improved as the rainy season could be the bringer of different kinds of epidemics.
• No appropriate therapeutic or wet supplementary feeding programmes have been implemented and the general food distribution depends on occasional gifts.
• Local voluntary personnel have been employed and guarantee the basic organisation of the camp, but a lack of continuous technical assistance is obvious.
• Basic essential drugs are not really available in the present situation [...]

The humanitarian assistance to the camps should be heavily increased and upgraded to improve the existing emergency situation.
Kismayo has a hospital with a 130 beds capacity, two basic MCH clinics (ICRC and World Concern) and 1 OPD (ICRC) outside the hospital. Only few basic drugs and medical material reach the hospital, but the normal attendance conditions for admission of reference cases have not been guaranteed in this emergency situation. No appropriate hospital material is present, basic orthopaedic operations cannot be effectuated, post-surgical attendance is almost not existing and there is only a possibility to admit people with minor injuries, while pregnant women and children have to be turned away because of a lack of human and material resources.
This hospital is supposed to be the reference hospital of the whole southern region. About 7 medical doctors are sometimes present in the hospital but are not able to do normal work. Outpatient department and women and child wards could easily be implemented if material resources and organisation skills would be present [...]
In an area of 20 kilometres around Shalaambote, at least 25,000 displaced people have settled in mainly 4 concentration points near villages: Qorioley, Golweyn, Bulomarertro and Merca. Malnutrition rates are very high and are estimated at about 80% for the displaced populations (Muac stick [arm band] method).
No detailed assessment has been made of the age-distribution and the sex ratio of the displaced people, but it is generally accepted that women and children constitute more than 80% of the population that more than 30% are under fives, of which 50% are severely malnourished and 30% moderately malnourished. For the given displaced

population of Golweyn, Qorioley, Bulomarertro and Merca this would give us a group of 3,750 severely malnourished and 2,250 moderately malnourished children under 3 years old.
Mortality rates in the camps are reaching figures up to 4/10,000/day and health conditions as well as health services are very poor.
In the whole area from Merca to Ala Futo, it is estimated that about 100,000 displaced people settled down, some in the houses of resident relatives, but most in dispersed settlements. As bushes are present all over the place, people compose a small nomadic hut with local materials and use skins or cloths to cover the hut structure, shelter is not yet the major problem. Nevertheless, sanitation levels are very low and temporary wells and latrines will have to be installed before the rainy season arrives (April).
The food availability is still acceptable for the local resident population, as it is a fertile area (Shebelle and Juba rivers). However, most displaced people do not have the resources to buy food and suffer heavily because of generalized famine.
Project proposal
MSF Belgium proposes to implement an emergency action of 6 months in favour of the local and displaced war-affected populations of Kismayo and the area around Merca, extendable to 12 months according to local security and political developments.
Other places could also be targeted according to the needs and the accessibility (for example at 15 km of Kismayo there is a population of 2,000 people suffering heavily from malnutrition, but the security on the road is presently not guaranteed).
The target population will be the local population and the displaced people of Kismayo, totalling more or less 100,000 people, and the displaced population in the area 20 km around Shalaambote, totalling more or less 25,000 displaced people.

I contacted the MSF France programme manager and then it was OK and I went. There was no written decision, but it was a decision taken after consultation. Once I was in Mogadishu, I insisted that I be able to do an explo. There were rumours of famine. There was already an increase in the malnutrition cases in Mogadishu itself. The French were isolated in Mogadishu with a surgical programme. They were scared, with good reason, to go out of the city. In a hospital, you see the wounded flow in and you're busy with caring for them. But when you step out of there it's different, it's dangerous. So they didn't have an objective view on the situation. They hadn't even seen it, because they'd never gone out there. I was the first one to visit Merca to the south of Mogadishu, the first to go into its little displaced camp. And what I found was a real famine. A significant number of people really without any food. The children were dying. I went back to Mogadishu to sound the alarm: 'If it's a famine, we must intervene. There at least needs to be several assessment missions,' etc. At the time people were still thinking MSF should do everything as an international group. However, I also wanted to open new projects for the Belgian section, whether or not that was in the international framework or outside of it. So I also wanted to go to see Kismayo, because I'd heard rumours such as how there was absolutely no medical care at the hospital. There I found the same problem of famine, plus a hospital that was effectively somewhere people were left to die. When I got back to Mogadishu I spoke about it but people weren't very enthusiastic. They had already been as far as Kismayo but they'd never said, 'Listen up, it's really serious down there!' But, it was serious! Me, when I see 300 people with a third of them on the ground, for me that's serious. There were women cooking cockroaches in a little metal pot that they'd made themselves, to try to feed their dying children. That's what was happening. And no one had realised this, it's incredible. Then I returned to Nairobi and the wheels started to turn. We planned a mission and in the discussions that followed, we decided where we would plant our flag. MSF France stayed in Merca and we set ourselves up in Kismayo. For the famine in

Kismayo it was obvious that it was necessary not just to intervene, but also to alert people. It was a famine that wasn't due to poor climate conditions, that was evident.

Dr [...], MSF Belgium, Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

The programme manager for MSF Belgium came through at the end of February. He visited Mogadishu and Merca and he went south to Kismayo. He was starting to get some information about what was happening. When I got back to Kenya after my visit to Somalia, I ran into him and I told him, 'Even so it would be good if you gave us the report on your explo mission.' It's pretty unbelievable that this report, which described a catastrophic situation, [was not internally distributed]. I finally got hold of it [one month later] via an MSF Belgium logistician stepping in and bringing it to me on the tarmac of the airport.

Anne Fouchard, MSF France, Communications Officer, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

At the end of March 1991, MSF Belgium opened a mission in Kismayo, which comprised nutritional aid to the displaced and a medico-surgical arm in the hospital. The hospital team took charge of those wounded due to the fighting that followed General Aidid's troops' attempt to take the town.
The nutritional programme team met some difficulties adapting to the scale of the task. A series of incidents, including a hold-up after the town was seized, led to the mission's closure in May, then its reopening in June, after a restructure. The team did not really function as a whole until the beginning of August. As with the team in Mogadishu, it did its work under the protection of armed guards.

'Fighting Intensifies Around Kismayo, Somalia's Southern City, a City Racked by War, and Devastated by Famine', **Letter,** Nicolas Krzemien, MSF Belgium Surgeon, Kismayo, 28 April 1992 (in French).

Extract:
At the hospital we had our own state of total conflict. The 'Mad Max', these 4x4s with the top lopped off fitted with a heavy, anti-aircraft gun, used to come in to the hospital's surgical block, stop suddenly in front of the operating theatre door, and offload their wounded amidst shouts, an air of panic, and general melee. The hospital guards had quit; those who stayed were overrun and powerless to resist such a surge of armed men and vehicles. The families wanted to know what had become of their injured relative who could be from one of seven different sub-clans, which added to the suspicion and the confusion that reigned. The tension mounted; scores of militia forced their way through the entrance to the emergency room where the Somali staff were trying to create a bit of order, berated copiously by the fighters returning from the frontline, hyper-agitated and often under the influence of qat, the stimulant that helped them keep going. Crossing the courtyard to go to the emergency room was becoming more and more risky; the burst of Kalashnikovs became more insistent.
At 5 pm a completely drugged-out fighter came into the operating theatre with his fist around a machine-gun. We were hoping to push aside the operating table, which was placed inopportunely against the door. We were receiving our fourth patient with haemorrhagic shock. After a quick resuscitation they were all operated on. Three

laparotomies (opening up the abdominal cavity) in one night, all shot in the stomach (perforated or ruptured small intestine, perforated colon, liver…), and five patients wounded with bullets in the thorax arrived one after the other. The thoracic drains placed in the emergency room drew up to two litres of blood. There was no blood bank or system of transfusion at the hospital when we arrived. We put pressure on the families of the wounded to give blood and I ended up giving 15 or so units over the four days to resuscitate some patients and enable a life-saving intervention. Sadly some families categorically refused blood donation; this caused the loss of a life in two cases despite the heroic efforts of the staff. I saw nurses who had just finished working for 48 hours non-stop lying on the table to give blood. How could I have agreed to be evacuated after that? The Somali team worked hard day and night, lead by the Somali surgeon, commanding respect and admiration that I still have for them today. The Somalis in the hospital, refugees in the majority, worked without pay and, in April, without food (under the 'food for work' scheme).

The perforations in leg arteries and veins were, for me, some of the most urgent priorities, and forced me to put off interventions like laparotomies that should not have had to wait. The decisions became difficult. A man arrived in deep shock. When I lifted the wound dressing two jets of blood spurted out from the orifices created by a bullet that had travelled through the thorax and the abdomen here and there causing a massive haemothorax and haemoperitoneum. We already had two laparotomies waiting. At 6 pm, the situation in the hospital was deteriorating to such an extent that it was extravagant to do surgery. The coordinator decided that we should pull out of the hospital for the night. A crisis meeting at ICRC eventually gave us an update that was a little less alarming. We decided that three MSF and two ICRC people would stay in Kismayo; the other international staff would be evacuated by air the following day.

On Sunday 19 April, 30 wounded people arrive at the hospital. The news from the frontline was less alarming. General Morgan launched a counter-offensive to push the frontline 200 km to the north three days later. On Monday 20 April, the level of tension dropped. Only 10 wounded. In the afternoon, all of a sudden, we no longer hear firing in the town. General Morgan made everyone disarm. Those who refused were coolly killed. A blockade was set up at the 10 km point on the road from the frontline to prevent desertions and guard the fighters on the front on the one hand, and on the other, to prevent the growing insecurity due to armed men in town. Looting became systematic: the Red Cross had its diesel reserves stolen and its vehicles were mysteriously stolen over 48 hours. In four days, the hospital would have received 120 wounded patients, of which 30 or so were operated on. Kismayo was ready to fall into the hands of the Hawiye. The counter-offensive by the previous dictator, Siad Barre, which was bringing the Darods to within 100 km of the capital, Mogadishu, forced General Aidid to concentrate his forces around Mogadishu once again.

Thus the Kismayo offensive would find itself deprived of its key support and spare the town… but for how long?

'Assessment Mission, Somalia, June 1992, **Report'**, Dr Pierre Harzé, Communications Director, MSF Belgium, 12 June 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Hospital

85 patients currently hospitalised; things functioning satisfactorily. There seem to be two or three doctors working regularly. Some undertake surgery with sufficiently correct methods. Currently there are no particularly big problems with the supply of medicines

(we had left behind considerable stocks), except for some antibiotics (which we will organise to provide). The general state of the hospital is as we left it (there has been very little looting of the hospital), but there remains much to be done. Apart from the antibiotics, the doctors asked us for fuel for the generator.

Nutrition

It is the biggest catastrophe I have ever witnessed (NB even though I was in Ethiopia in 1985). The displaced population is dying like flies, adults and children spread out on the ground, some dying in the street. The cemetery on the edge of the 'Horn of Africa' camp (currently housing 550 people) has 145 graves, of which +/- 75 are new (from the past two to three weeks). The malnutrition is also visibly evident in town (scores of cases of marasmus and kwash [kwashiorkor]). The first food delivery (by the ICRC), 2,500 tonnes' worth, has just been unloaded at the port. Distribution should begin in the coming week. A fresh delivery of 1,000 tonnes is expected in the days to come. Basically, the camps (+/- 25 of them spread in and around the town and sheltering 500-8,000 people each) are currently supplied with Unimix distributed by UNICEF. Nobody knows the situation of people living deeper inside the country. I don't even dare try to imagine it...

4. Recommendations

Security

1. Establish a diplomatic presence for Médecins Sans Frontières in Mogadishu. Patrick Vial, MSF Coordinator, who understands the situation in the country extremely well and has numerous contacts, should be officially appointed as MSF 'representative' (including for MSF Belgium) in Somalia. It is obvious that he would not have any responsibility for implementation of the programme but he could be a precious interlocutor with Aidid and Osman Ato.
2. Secure the collaboration of the authorities in Kismayo. We requested and received a letter signed by the representatives of four factions currently in power in Kismayo, a letter in which they expressed their regret for past events (looting), their desire to see us come back at the earliest opportunity, and their agreement to take responsibility for ensuring the security of our teams. It is very important that all of the factions are always invited to the meetings that we are seeking with the Kismayo authorities.
3. Accept the presence of armed guards in the house, around the hospital, and when we move around. These guards will be paid by us and will comprise members of the different factions in power (we have asked to be able to add in some of our ex-guards and this seems possible).

We started with one intervention in Kismayo in April. It had a number of different aspects. In the hospital, we had a surgical team plus a nutritional team that had very little experience in terms of nutrition level and also in terms of coordination. It didn't work well. And then there was the aggression, threats, thefts, an incident in the house. There was a hold-up. The team was evacuated. That happens once, twice, and the third time you close your mission. Everyone went home and in June, we started again with different individuals, and that worked well.

Dr [...], MSF Belgium, Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

This period was very difficult. I came home from Kismayo traumatised. It was the height of the famine and I saw people die in the street on piles of filth. It was really horrible. I spoke on television to mobilise people but it was a subject that generated very little interest.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

A. EPIDEMIOLOGY FOR ADVOCACY

In March 1992, all the information that had emerged concerning the famine crystallised for MSF France into active consideration of how to respond to the nutritional emergency.
Over and above the reluctance of certain individuals to launch a surgical programme, questions arose as to the relevance of MSF opening therapeutic feeding centres while the famine's scale seemed to demand massive food distributions, which the association was not equipped to organise, particularly due to security reasons.
Eventually, it was agreed that it was necessary to make a public alert to push international donors to finance and organise massive distributions. It was decided to undertake an assessment of the nutritional status of the people in the Merca region, their access to care, and their mortality rate, to back up this appeal and to guide operational planning.
This was the first time in the history of MSF that an epidemiological survey was implemented with the assumed objective of using its results to convince people of the seriousness of a situation and to put pressure on international actors.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 5 March 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Explo mission in Somalia: the beginnings of a ceasefire in Moga mean that there is a risk in the near future of many agencies coming into Somalia. MSF seems to be behind in terms of assessing the needs outside Moga. This delay has multiple causes. Serge Manoncourt has been asked to undertake an assessment with the following criteria: mortality, access to care, nutritional status. The needs are expected to be enormous. This assessment has a strong likelihood of leading to an intervention. Martine Lochin [recruitment officer] has used this as a springboard to raise the recruitment problem – we are currently short of experienced people.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 27 March 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: three teams on the ground: Dutch MSF in the north, French MSF in the centre, Belgian MSF in Kismayo. The situation there is also catastrophic, including people displaced. Our programme in Mogadishu is undergoing some modification. An assessment is planned for a possible activity on the outskirts. Our position is difficult,

humanitarian aid risks being used as a political weapon by the different camps. During a meeting in Brussels, the question was raised about contribution of aid to the war effort in terms of the payment of guards by NGOs. Marc has asked for a Board debate on the subject.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 9 April 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: a pocket of 50,000 people has been discovered in Merca in a significant state of malnutrition. It looks difficult to implement a programme.

HQ [Paris] had decided to do an epidemiological survey. Although we were on the ground, we weren't necessarily the most competent people to assess the situation with the necessary precision. And even an epidemiologist would not risk declaring the severity of a situation without having a certain minimum of scientific documentation.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

We go ahead with this nutritional survey to have a basis for our arguments, evidence to be able to convince everybody that the country needs to be swamped with food aid. It is well known that people die from hunger. So the survey isn't necessary to understand this. When there was the mass exodus of the Kurds, we had made good use of Epicentre's survey on the state of health of the refugees in our communications. But in the Somali case, it's the first time that we undertake an epidemiological survey for lobbying purposes. With this survey, we do more than just communicate; we sound the alert.

Dr Brigitte Vasset, MSF France, Director of Operations, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Normally we favour [information about our] operations and direct images [of what's happening]. That's what happened in Ethiopia in 1985; it was the BBC film that had shown the seriousness of the situation. For Somalia, that wasn't enough, we needed to make our argument with figures, and that was appealing because it allowed us to better grasp the problem. Effectively, until we had the results of the survey, we believed that it was a famine, but we had never measured the extent of it.

Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France, Programme Manager in Somalia until February 1992; Deputy Director of Operations from March 1992, in charge of Somalia April-September 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

This is part of a shift over a long time in MSF's communication towards becoming more numbers-based. We had already done this type of survey in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan in [19]88-89, looking at mortality due to the conflict. We wanted to continue to drive home the point, with figures on how devastating this war in Afghanistan was even though it wasn't recognised as such. However, Somalia played a more important role in

introducing figures as an objective element in public positioning, in lobbying, and public pressure. Our figures were picked up subsequently, or more to the point, our survey was picked up, but grossly distorted and instrumentalised.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 1 and 2 April 1991, Patrick Vial, who had reassumed coordination of the MSF France mission in Mogadishu after several weeks of absence, carried out a preparatory mission for the nutritional assessment in the Merca region and made contact with the local authorities there. V4

'Displaced Population – General **Survey**, Marca, Corrioley, Audegle Areas, 1 and 2 April', Patrick Vial, MSF General Coordinator in Mogadishu and Philippe Gonçalves, MSF Medical Coordinator in Mogadishu, 4 April 1992 (in English).

Extract:
This survey was aimed to collect general information related to the situation of the displaced people in the above-mentioned districts. Since the people are relatively mobile, and no reliable data were available, the following information may not be very accurate.
Sources of information are generally:
• ICRC Merka team (special thanks to them).
• Displaced people responsible.
• Sheiks and elders.
• Administrative authorities [...]
In General [...]
• High level of malnutrition is obvious.
• Mortality is extremely high, especially among women and children.
• People usually survive by eating wild fruits that have to be cooked for hours, as well as small green bananas.
• Most of them drink water from the river.
• When no concrete shelter is available, they build tiny huts with dried banana leaves, which will be wiped out at the first rain [...]
Urgent Needs
• Food: feeding centres if general distribution can be started.
• Fuel - water pumps - water treatment.
• Shelter: plastic sheeting - tents.
• Dispensaries: Health staff [...]
Nutritional: Almost all the children below 5 (more than 95%) are in a condition of severe malnutrition obvious at first sight. Mortality rate in Corriolei, for instance, is 2% daily (but figure uncertain). More than 90% of malnutrition observed is deep marasmus, the rest is Kwashiorkor. Children above 5 are also affected to a lesser extent, as well as an undetermined percentage of adults. [...]
Conclusion: Absolute emergency and priority must be given to food supply and settlement of feeding centers in the area, after which, efforts should be focused on shelters (plastic sheeting), medicines, supplies, and water sanitation.

I took over coordination of this mission again in March 1992 and almost immediately it seemed obvious to us that we had to stop focusing only on surgery and that we needed to move towards [dealing with] malnutrition. I was told, 'MSF is too hemmed in in Mogadishu, it doesn't get out, doesn't take any interest in what's happening around it. When you get back there, get out beyond Mogadishu, try to look around.' So I did an explo over in Merca, Brava, and Qoryooley, in a valley two hours by car from Mogadishu, which is apparently one of the most fertile in Somalia. It wasn't a medical explo. It was just to observe. The famine was already obvious there, yet it was an area that should logically have suffered much less due to famine than the rest of the country. In Qoryooley they grow bananas, it's the best irrigated part in southern Somalia. I reported back that there were big problems there, that we had to intervene.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Between 18 and 28 April 1992, a team composed of Dr Serge Manoncourt, epidemiologist; Brigitte Doppler, nurse; and François Enten, sanitation expert, completed an epidemiological survey in the Merca and Qoryooley districts, 150 km from Mogadishu, among a population of around 100,000 inhabitants, both residents and people who had fled there.
The results were shocking: malnutrition is the leading cause of death among the entire population assessed. It accounts for 41.6% of the total number of deaths among displaced persons living in camps. In these camps, In March 1992, 0% of children under five were malnourished, 75% of them severely. Among the residents, the comparable figures were 68% and 43%.
The assessment team recommended an MSF intervention. However, it confirmed that any specific assistance would remain symbolic, unless a general food distribution was undertaken rapidly.

'Demography, Nutrition, Mortality, Water & Sanitation – of Merca-Qorioley areas, April 18-28, 1992 – **Final Report**', Brigitte Doppler, François Enten and Dr Serge Manoncourt, Mogadishu, May 25, 1992 (in English).

Extract:
1. Introduction:
Since the Somali civil war started in January 1991 many families have left the areas of conflict. It is thought that several hundred thousand displaced people now live around Mogadishu in drastic conditions. About one hundred fifty (150) kilometers South of Mogadishu, in the districts of Merca and Qorioley, many people have sought refuge in four major sites: Merka, Golweyn, Bulo Marer and Qorioley.
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who has been attending the wounded for 18 months in the surgical wards of the Medina hospital in Mogadishu, now plans to extend its assistance to displaced persons. In order to get a picture of the situation to enable correct targeting, a nutrition, mortality, demography and water & sanitation assessment was organized in the 4 above-mentioned locations, from April 18 to 28, 1992.
2. Objectives:
The overall goal of the survey was to provide information that would be needed to design and plan future MSF assistance in the Merca-Qorioley areas.

To accomplish this, a survey was conducted in 2 large villages (Bulo Marer and Golweyn) and 2 small camps (Merca and Qorioley). The specific survey objectives were:
1. To estimate the number of displaced persons and residents;
2. To assess the nutritional status of children under five;
3. To assess the mortality rate of the previous 12 months;
4. To assess the water supply and sanitation.
3. Methodology:
A previous two days trip, with the MSF coordinator in Mogadishu, was made in order to evaluate the feasibility of such a survey. Meetings with the elders and local committees were arranged at each site. An explanation of the objectives of the assessment was given.
Two teams, composed of two Somali public health nurses and two MSF personnel, were chosen to conduct the survey. A local calendar and questionnaire were developed in collaboration with one of the nurses. Translation in the Somali language and photocopies of about 700 questionnaires were done in Mogadishu, with the help of UNICEF. To ensure data collection reliability, a one day training on the survey methods was held for the Somali P.H. [public health] nurses before departure to the field.
The assessment was designed as a household survey to be conducted in both displaced and resident families. Emphasis was placed on the displaced camps and settlements. A systematic random sampling method was used to determine the study households. In the displaced camps and settlements, a complete count of families was conducted. In the towns, every section was surveyed; and the sampling method attempted to be proportional to the site of the estimated population. In camps, when more than one family was living in the same compound, only one was selected at random.
This resulted in a sample which included 1 out of every 4 or 5 families in the displaced camps and settlements and 1 out of every 10 families in the villages and towns. This epidemiological investigation was composed of four distinct surveys:
1) For the nutritional survey, children between the age of 6 months and five years (less than 115 cm in height) were selected. They were screened using the left middle upper arm circumference (MUAC). In towns and camps, not only children from the selected families were screened but also those living in the same compound, tent, or room. For the demographic estimate, data were cross-checked with information from different sources, the survey itself, elders and camp representatives' data, and the 1989 census.
2) The mortality assessment was conducted on each selected family, using a one-year recall period: the end of Ramadan 1991 to the survey date corresponds approximately to 12 months. Questions were asked about the cause and the symptoms before death.
3) During the survey, usage of the water consumption per family was conducted, as well as the water source, and whether the water was free or not.
The EPI-INFO (CDC, Atlanta) statistical program was used for data entry and analysis.
4) The water and sanitation survey was conducted by a MSF water and sanitation engineer. He checked all the wells, hand pumps and boreholes in the area and contacted personnel who were formerly involved in the water supply department in order to get an overall picture of the water system of the region. [...]
6. Discussion [...]
[6.]3. Mortality: Mortality findings are dramatic. Since the method used is known to be unprecise because of recall bias, therefore given rates are conservative. More specifically, demographers have found the one-year recall method underestimates the real mortality rates. The unbalanced sex ratio is in consideration of under-reporting.
Malnutrition is the leading cause of mortality in each group of population. Malnutrition is responsible for 41.6% of the total number of deaths among the displaced living in the camp. The second cause of death, in each group, (9.5 to 13.3%), is war casualties (bullets

or shells). Diarrhea and measles are the other most common causes. One must note that A.R.I. [respiratory infection] is not represented as expected [...]
7. Conclusions:
Clearly, survival assistance is needed in all areas surveyed. The overall dramatic situation of the population, especially of displaced persons, is pushing Médecins Sans Frontières to open a mission in the surveyed areas.
MSF assistance will not be efficient if the general food distribution does not start quickly in Merca-Qorioley districts. It is understood that any specific assistance (such as supplementary feeding centers, safe water supply, preventive and curative medical care) would be symbolic as the population is still starving without any global food assistance. The 3 tons of Unimix, provided by UNICEF and distributed by MSF during the survey, are not going to change anything given the drastic situation. It has helped some starving children and the local people who try to help the displaced, but thousands remain unfed. Two out of order hand pump wells were repaired during the survey.
MSF is willing to provide emergency assistance to the Merca, Bulo Marer, Golweyn, and Qorioley population as soon as general food is provided. In general, the objectives of the MSF mission will be to establish feeding centers, provide adequate water supply to the displaced, take in charge the basic sanitation, immunize children against measles, and provide assistance to Merca hospital.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 24 April 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia – Fighting continues in the south. No longer a real frontline situation in Mogadishu but there is significant tension: women are forming demonstrations to demand food from UN organisations, and bands of looters roam the city.
An exploratory mission has been completed. An assessment mission is underway looking at the displaced populations 50 km from Mogadishu, where the malnutrition rate seems to vary between 70 per cent and 90 per cent. Access is difficult and analysis is underway regarding the logistical and political networks.
Marc [Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Deputy Director of Operations] is conducting a visit with Odile [Delacotte, MSF France Programme Manager]. The objectives are to re-focus the programmes: stopping medical emergency activities in Mogadishu, evaluating the work of other organisations, establishing nutritional teams in collaboration with local Somali organisations.
Jean-Luc [Nahel, Secretary General of Board of Directors] has left for Mogadishu, and Marc hopes that on his return the Board will debate the issues of impartiality, neutrality, and the use and payment of armed guards to ensure the teams' security.
Negotiations are being undertaken at the UN for it to send in police forces to allow a more reliable delivery of aid.

We were able to benefit from an opening up of the frontline to get out of the city and go do this study on the southeastern side of Mogadishu. We left on the road to Merca, the only one open at the time, which was probably representative of how much of the whole south of Somalia could be reached then. The idea was to do a survey of the nutritional state of the populations there and also a retrospective mortality study. We set up our general base in Merca and from there, the authorities and the local associations told us where the displaced were. We gradually found our way to the big concentrations of people. It was Serge

who decided on the methodology. We did a population survey; by that I mean a headcount because there was an enormous amount of displaced people. People were trying to get to Mogadishu, which was blockaded all around. So they couldn't get into the city and stayed in the surroundings. They moved around searching for food for as long as they could stay upright. So there was a real concentration of displaced people between Merca and Brava. The area had close to 400,000 people, with more displaced than residents. We did a population count in four different sites. We also did a retrospective mortality study, asking each family how many deaths there had been and from what: the war, illness, or malnutrition. And then we did a nutritional survey: we tried to measure the number of malnourished. It was terrible. Serge, who had already worked in Ethiopia, said to us even before we had released the results, 'It's worse than Ethiopia.' There was a huge number who had reached the limit of all their resources, who were in the process of dying. That was the worst of the things I saw. We also saw other horrific scenes of the famine: people scratching at the trees to eat the bark, people gathered around putrefying camel carcases to eat. There was really nothing left to eat. There was an enormous amount of malnourished adults, with kwashiorkor or oedema, exhausted, at the end of their limit, no longer moving. There was a huge number of dead people, many fresh graves, and cemeteries. I have never seen so much death or so much suffering. We had been expecting something pretty terrible but we were astonished by what we found. The three of us had the feeling that it was completely pathetic to do our weighing and measuring when anyway everybody needed assistance, and that we'd be better off making ourselves able to launch into action immediately. To which Serge said, 'It's very important what we're in the process of doing, we absolutely must complete it. We need this scientific data to be able to speak out about what is happening.' And it's true, we were the first to bear witness.

Brigitte Doppler, MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; MSF France Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Choosing which operational strategy to apply posed a dilemma. The insecurity and the lack of sufficient operational capacity, as well as the desire to be effective, dictated the resolve to treat only moderately malnourished children who had more chance of being saved than the severely malnourished. For similar reasons it was decided not to address the measles epidemic, which was also afflicting the population.

It was gruelling to see people dying of hunger, with little hope of being able to do something for them. The situation was really grave. There were plenty of people who, whatever happened, were going to die. We gathered all our data on the ground, and while Serge pulled out the preliminary findings, I began to work on establishing a strategy for the famine response. That's when we decided on what we were going to do for what type of person. That was really tough. It was obvious enough that it was impossible to do therapeutic feeding centres in areas still experiencing war and with the enormous numbers of people suffering. So we decided to treat the moderately malnourished children in a way to be able to do that at volume, because in the therapeutic centres once you go over 100 children you're no longer effective because the care is so medicalised. We made our target quite broad, beyond children of zero to five years. We took adolescents and gave them nutritional formulas adapted somewhat for the situation. In Somalia, food transport was quite problematic. That's how the famous premixed flour, Unimix, was invented in Nairobi. In the sacks you had soya

beans, corn and oil, prepared together in a way that at the other end all you had to do was put the mix into water and heat it. That helped limit handling procedures, and the transport of oil and sugar, which were vulnerable commodities.

Brigitte Doppler, MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; MSF France Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Thanks to the study we were able to see things a bit more clearly. We knew the potential number of beneficiaries, their nutritional state, and the risk of dying or not for many of the children. We knew our level of resources and we were able to make our calculations better, and at the same time that gave us a better political understanding of the situation. And then we discovered the malnutrition rate of 70%, and the 50% for moderate malnutrition. The assessment enabled us to define a new… and abominable strategy. Our reasoning was this: 'There are 70% of the children malnourished, 20% severely malnourished and 50% moderately malnourished. If we want to treat the severely malnourished children it will need an enormous effort: six to eight meals a day, a nurse per 100 children, etc. We'll use an incredible amount of energy in limited security conditions and a generally limited supply of food. We won't get good results and during this time the 50% moderately malnourished children will sink further into severe malnutrition. We won't be able to pull it off.' So our thinking was to make it possible for the 50% malnourished children not to get worse. We were going to try to help them recuperate. Of course we opened our door to severely malnourished children, but the care that we would give them would not enable some of them to survive.

Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France, Programme Manager in Somalia until February 1992; then Deputy Director of Operations from March 1992, in charge of Somalia April-September 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

We made a conscious decision not to deal with the measles epidemic. It's not that we didn't recognise that there was an epidemic, but that we took our decision not to do anything because we couldn't do everything, because we knew that we wouldn't manage, that we'd kill ourselves in the process. It made us feel bad and it was debated a lot. Subsequently, did we do the right thing or not? Could we have saved more people by treating the measles?

Dr Brigitte Vasset, MSF France, Director of Operations, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 21 April 1991, images of Merca filmed by a cameraman who accompanied the first assessment mission were broadcast, along with the appeal by MSF's coordinator in Mogadishu, on primetime news on France's French television station, TF1. V5

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 15 April 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: EUP cameraman Philippe Freling has departed with Serge Manoncourt. He was able to film around Merca. He will return Wednesday 20 April. A communication plan needs to be put in place to utilise his images to the best advantage. [The network] FR [France] Aquitaine also plans to go in and will relay the images via its FR national and A2 channels. We will wait until Serge returns to create a detailed press release. Discussed the opportunity to do a press conference on Somalia; should we wait for Serge's return or that of MGE?

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 21 April 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: Philippe Freling's footage from Merca and Patrick Vial's appeal will be broadcast today on JT [Journal Télévisé /TV news] at 8 pm on TF1.

On 21 May 1992, MSF France organised a press conference to release the findings of the Merca-Qoryooley epidemiological study. Those responsible issued an alert to the famine, compared it to the famine that decimated Ethiopia in 1984-85, and identified the insecurity as a contributing factor. They announced the opening of aid programmes in the Merca and Qoryooley districts. They warned once more that MSF's assistance could not start without a general food distribution and, more generally, a massive aid operation.

'Somalia Endangered Populations', **Press Conference** Dossier, MSF France, 21 May 1992 (in English).

Extract:
The number of deaths increased dramatically from January to April 1992. Fifty six percent (279) of the total of 497 deaths reported from April 1991 to April 1992 occurred, since January 1992. This result is further evidence of the increasing severity of the situation over the past four months.

Food
A 24-hour food consumption recall survey was conducted (sample 4,169 persons). Among the displaced in the camps:
• 22% ate nothing the day prior to the survey
• 47% ate "garas," a wild fruit which is not eaten in Somalia in normal times. It is known to have low nutritional value.
Among displaced in the towns:
• 7% ate nothing the day prior to the survey
• 19% ate garas
Among the residents, 9% ate nothing and 20% ate garas

The others ate green bananas and mangoes, some ate meat, maize or rice, but the daily rations are extremely small portions. [...]
Somalia is on the brink of famine. For nearly a year, almost no food has come to this war-torn country, which even before the war was chronically dependent on food aid. The war for food is one of the basic components of the acute security situation, and hunger threatens 4.5 million Somalis. The international community cannot remain insensitive to this approaching tragedy. A massive emergency relief effort is absolutely necessary to avert a severe famine on a scale equal to the Ethiopian famine of 1984-85.

'Aid Airlift Delayed for a Week', **AFP** (France), Geneva, 21 May 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières Chairman Rony Brauman told a news conference in Paris the organization had decided to begin an emergency programme in Merka, 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Mogadishu, where "the situation is tragic." The charity would open centres in the districts of Merka and Qorioley offering intensive feeding, drinking water, and medical treatment. "But that would not solve the problem," said Dr. Brauman, there must also be a massive distribution of food.
MSF appealed to countries and international organizations "to mobilize as quickly as possible." MSF warned that the famine in the region was as serious as that which decimated Ethiopia's population in 1984 and 1985.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 26 May 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: things are moving, people are starting to talk about it (A2 has returned, TF1 is leaving on Friday with us, FR3 covered it well, there's special exposure in France Soir on 26 May as follow-up to our press conference of 21 May).

The press conference room was full. Serge Manoncourt pulled out some blades of grass from his pocket. 'This is what the people over there eat, it's called "garas", they're eating grass!'

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

B. A SLOW STARTER

Despite all the efforts for months by the MSF communications managers, who encouraged their operations colleagues to support an alert on the Somali crisis, and despite media coverage of the nutritional study, the issue of famine in Somalia did not really gain traction in the media, and the international community did not rush to the aid of the Somalis.
Several proposals to establish a press relations officer in Nairobi, to compensate for the lack of availability of the teams to cover this function, were rejected –

sometimes for reasons of security, but more often because of the premise that it is the country coordinator who fulfils the role of spokesperson. At the end of June, the operational directors of the three sections, pushed by the senior levels of the MSF international office, decided to open a position for a communications officer for the Horn of Africa, based in Nairobi, despite the lack of support by certain people in the field. The position was eventually filled, and up and running by September.

Minutes from MSF France's Executive Committee Meetings, MSF France, 20 February, 26 February, 4 March and 18 March 1992 (in French).

Extract:
20 February
Somalia: Communication on our presence needs to be strengthened. We will contact Thierry (Regional Coordinator, based in Nairobi) to ask him to attend as many press conferences as possible. AFP issues daily dispatches and we are never cited.
A field visit is planned for the Horn of Africa, and particularly Somalia, at the end of the month of March. There is a proposal to send a communications officer to Mogadishu.
Interscoop is on its way to Somalia and will pass through Mogadishu, to investigate a range of topics for American TV channels [...]
Development will send out a letter on Somalia on 10 March.
26 February
Update: Somali refugees in Kenya: we still don't have any images. The reason that MSF's presence has remained in silence is now a bit clearer: ICRC, according to MGE, has set up an aid programme so enormous that it eclipses all the others. Anne [Fouchard, Communications Officer] wishes to send someone to Mogadishu to collect a package of extremely important information that our teams on the ground do not have time to handle, but this poses a big security problem. Meanwhile there is very likely to be a communications activity in Nairobi to meet all the journalists based there.
4 March
Somalia: the proposal to send in a comms officer was refused by Marc, essentially for security reasons. Instead the Moga team, which is under pressure at the moment, is to be re-motivated to communicate on MSF's action; we can start sending in journalists again.
18 March
Somalia: on average two journalists on the ground each week (predominantly Anglo-Saxon press). TF1 dropped its plans. The field reminds us to carefully brief the journalists before they depart.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 14 April 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Update by Anne [Fouchard]. She has visited Mogadishu and Kismayo and can confirm that while Kismayo may be calm, Mogadishu is experiencing extreme tensions despite the ceasefire. The reasons for the absence of communication from the Somalia mission are clearly evident on the ground: the tension and the workload strains on the team do not allow them to fulfil even the minimum of administrative duties and communications. Brigitte's proposal at this meeting: to create a communications and information officer

position based in Nairobi. This proposal had been rejected because it's the role of the coordinator, who is the mission's spokesperson to the media. The principal question raised at the meeting: How can communication between the different countries of the Horn be improved?
Several decisions were made: a regional gathering approximately every six months, daily contact by radio (codes have been prepared for this). International turnover is significant and of concern; it was proposed to introduce mission lengths of six months instead of three, with a break in Nairobi every five weeks. The possibility of making shared announcements to the press for all of the Horn of Africa was discussed. Anne reminded us of the necessity for the field to send clear messages to the desks, which have the task of centralising information and drafting the communications to the press. In conclusion, Anne gathered enough elements in Mogadishu to be able to create a considerable press kit.

'Position of Communication Officer in Nairobi', **Fax** from Alain Destexhe, Head of MSF International Office, to Operations Directors, Communication Directors, Horn of Africa Desks, Brussels, 2 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
As you probably know, in their last meeting in Paris on June 29th, operations directors decided to create an international position of "communications officer" based in Nairobi for a 6-month period.
He/she will strengthen internal communications between the sections, particularly by writing relevant SITREPS about the situation in the Horn of Africa. She/he is not supposed to take on the role of the different coordinators in dealing and cooperating with each other. She/he will also act as a press officer for all sections in the field (for more details see the proposal and the minutes of the operations meeting).
The position will be occupied immediately by Anne-Marie Huby for two weeks. She will also take this opportunity to analyse the practical opportunities of the job in the field and discuss these points with the MSF representatives in Nairobi. She will also put forward a budget which could be shared, equally by MSF Belgium, MSF Holland, and MSF France. She will arrive in Nairobi on Tuesday July 7th at 5.35 am. Thanks to organise her welcome.

The final decision on the reporting will be taken by operations and communications directors when Anne-Marie is back. For reasons of convenience one section only will be in charge of administrative reporting.

'Concerns: Meeting with Thierry Durand, Johan Hesselink and Stefaan van der Borght on the European post of Communications Officer for the Horn of Africa', **Fax** from Anne-Marie Huby, MSF International Communication Officer to Horn of Africa Desks (MSF Belgium/MSF Holland/MSF France) Communications Directors, Alain Destexhe [MSF International Secretary General] , Nairobi, 15 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Hello,
Nothing new under the sun. MSF coordinators in Nairobi do not want a press officer to be based in Nairobi, even temporarily, for a few obvious reasons: they are perfectly

happy with briefing their own list of press contacts, and if there is any lack of information about the region, well, it is the head offices' fault.
Question: As a key area of concern for MSF, does the Horn not deserve a little more PR work to get coverage of under publicised problems?
Answer: Thierry [Durand] (MSF France) and Johan [Hesselink] (MSF Holland) seem to resent MSF's sudden interest for a region they championed on their own for years. MSF is now jumping onto a bandwagon they drove for ages - shocking (NDLC:[8] What if MSF did not? This is simply Catch 22 revisited).
After a bit of self-pity, all of them, Stefaan thinks that hiring an additional PR person amounts to a plaster-on-a-wooden-leg solution. Thierry: "I will be ready to review my position when all three head offices have a common approach to the region. As long as [the programme managers] hold meetings just for the sake of fighting, I think that this kind of post will look like another half measure."
Everybody finally admits that there ARE gaps in our dealings with the press - we have sent many journalists to the field, but we are rarely quoted in hard news coverage as a regular source. The recent security problems in the north of Kenya, and the interest of the press that followed, showed the usefulness of a press person. Before enlightenment strikes head offices, there surely must be some space for more active press work in Nairobi in the meantime? For Thierry, it is not even worth trying: the news market is western-orientated, MSF will not change anything about that. As evidence for this, he cites the difficulties of the *Le Monde* correspondent in Nairobi to impose stories about Somalia onto his Paris news desk. The idea of broadening our press contacts does not seem to spring to anybody's mind. The media do not want to know... End of story.
Nobody can deny that it is obviously much easier to draw the attention of Nairobi-based journalists, better aware of regional problems than their European news desks. But for Johan, the burden of having to brief an additional person in his office would be unbearable. His sitreps to Amsterdam will remain the only channel of information he is ready to use. Back to square one.
Only Belgium was keen on accepting a three-month trial. Stefaan believes that MSF needs to integrate information on its activities from the field, and that the presence of a press officer would relieve him of much media work.
One soothing remark though, by Johan: "We agree on the ends, not on the means." But do we? I again heard the classic remarks on the 'dangers of losing control' of information, and the odd examples of evil coverage.
We found a nice way to end the meeting: Thierry set them a deadline - no joke here. MSF Belgium, Holland, and France are to hold monthly meetings, after which Thierry will write sitreps and an update for the attention of journalists and donors. In three months' time, they will review the output of their new cooperation.
In the latent show of the field's fierce sense of independence, they agreed: "If in some weeks' time, a press officer is imposed on us, which is likely to happen, we will welcome him or her, of course."

8. This is a francophone reference signifying 'note de la claviste', ie editor's note.

'MSF France in Somalia – January 1991 to May 1993 – Mission Evaluation – Final **Report**', Virginie Raisson and Dr Serge Manoncourt, 4 February 1994 (in English from French original, translation by Richard Swanson and Eric Bullington).

Extract:
From the beginning of March onwards, the heads of the communications team were solid advocates for intervention (although, at the start, only on an individual basis) and were pushing for MSF to launch exploratory missions; first for a large-scale nutrition program, later for free food distribution. As the weeks passed, tensions mounted between members of the communications and the operations teams. On top of this conflict was the uncertainty that prevailed due to indecisiveness inside operations itself. This, along with the changes of program directors, was leading to dysfunction within; information was flowing poorly at MSF, especially between operations and communications. It was all the more difficult, as a result, to spread it to the outside.
Next, the major news campaign based on the results of Epicentre's study was coming to a close. What should MSF be communicating now? Because in critical circumstances such as these, and insofar as MSF is on the ground, communications feels a duty to react. By saying what, however? Appeal to other organizations to act? Difficult since the "company" seemed reluctant to intervene, itself. Appeal to the UN to intervene? There hadn't been sufficient time for reflection to take a position on a question such as that. Launch a fundraising campaign? It is duly launched – but very soon interrupted because MSF is still not in the field.

During this time we continued to try to get media exposure. The press release, with its figures from the study, had been a bit like a sword cutting through water. The water wouldn't stick. We had little reverberations, some uptake, articles on this and that but none of this allowed us to get people talking about what was happening. It needed to become an international crisis and we just couldn't get it up to that bar, we were always somewhere below it.

Anne Fouchard, MSF France, Communications Officer, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

I remember that a real effort was made to get Somalia onto centre-stage with the media. It was like Ethiopia in 1984: people were dying like flies and no one moved to act. We struggled so hard. But we couldn't break through. It was really disheartening.

Dr Brigitte Vasset, MSF France, Director of Operations, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

We had difficulties rallying public opinion. In the beginning, when the regime crumbled, it was definitely because the situation was perceived as a war between savages, what with the war, the destruction, and the warlords' rise in power. Then there was the famine, which was quite real, and pretty alarming images came out of it. But the public realised that the convoys were always being attacked. It wasn't the type of situation where the suffering was black and white and everybody could jump in with both feet.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

We were always against having communications officers in the field. They may have been useful when there was an influx of journalists but otherwise, what we were doing with journalists was not 'communications' and it wasn't communications officers that could do it. We weren't in contact with the few journalists who covered Somalia to communicate on MSF. We considered them colleagues. We needed to exchange information with them, to swap political analysis. Jean Hélène came to cover the situation in Somalia for Le Monde*, RFI,* La Croix*. It meant something to us that people talk about Somalia. He went in with us regularly and then he began to freelance and he made that work. At the time it was complicated. Journalists weren't working yet with satellite phones. They had a tape recorder that they plugged into the telephone with a special device. Jean fought to be able to report on Somalia and he wrote articles and articles. But nothing happened, and he was being paid by published piece. He contacted his editors to ask why nothing was getting published and they replied that his stories of clans and sub-clans were too complicated, that they didn't interest anyone, and that they would only print two lines in brief on the number of dead!*

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 23 May 1992, in his report at the Annual General Assembly, the president of MSF France emphasised the fact that awareness-raising activities on the famine for the international community were equally as important as the operational activities.

'**President's Report** to the Annual General Assembly of MSF France', 23 May 1992 (in French).

Extract:
In recognition of the very specific situation, which I won't enlarge upon here because it would take too long, we also launched into raising awareness internationally, amongst the United Nations, the European Community, the press, the public, and European governments. This aspect of MSF's mission is no less important than operations. We hope that this particularly difficult mission will continue in better conditions over the coming months. To remind you, ICRC too has been the subject of attacks and also had a plane forced to turn around recently, an incident that, thankfully, ended well.

Meanwhile, on 24 April 1992, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 751, which authorised the dispatch of 50 military observers to monitor the ceasefire and the distribution of food aid in Mogadishu. It appointed the Algerian diplomat, Mohamed Sahnoun, as Special Representative of the UN in Somalia.

'Mohamed Sahnoun Appointed as Special Representative of the UN in Somalia', **AFP** (France), New York, 29 April 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The Algerian diplomat Mohamed Sahnoun was officially appointed Monday as Special Representative of the UN in Somalia, announced the UN Press Service.

In line with Resolution 751 of the Council, adopted on 24 April, Mr Sahnoun will be responsible for the actions of the UN in Somalia, where 50 military observers are about to be dispatched to monitor the ceasefire established on 3 March between Interim President Ali Mahdi and his rival, General Mohamed Aidid.
The Council also agreed, in principle, to monitoring by armed force of the distribution of food aid in the Somali capital. However, Council members declared their wish for this operation, a first in the annals of the UN, to establish a compatible relationship. Until now the UN has been negotiating directly with the belligerents for rights of passage and truces for its humanitarian operations. Mr Sahnoun will also have the role of assisting the UN secretary general in the search for a peaceful solution to end the civil war.

At the beginning of May 1992, supply recommenced via Mogadishu port, nothing having come in for six months. A number of NGOs delivered assistance to the displaced people. The international press criticised the aid organisations for employing armed guards to protect the transport and distribution of foods.
As for MSF France, despite its decision not to wait for the findings of the epidemiological study before starting its nutritional aid operations, the section only started to open its programmes progressively from the end of May. This delay, which caused some controversy, was in part due to the reluctance of certain individuals to proceed in the face of what they considered to be insurmountable hazards. V6

'Africa: Drought and War – Famine Threatens Some 20 Countries', ***Le Monde*** (France), Marie-Pierre Subtil, 21 May 1993, (in French).

Extract:
As usual, distributing food has become a power play. A blatant situation in Somalia, a country ruined by civil war. One to two hundred children die each day in Mogadishu, according to the capital representative of the organisation, Save the Children. At the beginning of May, UN agents were rejoicing over a big win: for the first time in six months, a boat loaded with 5,000 tonnes of food had been able to disembark in Mogadishu! "It's fabulous that we were able to obtain the cooperation of the two parties to the conflict," celebrated a UN representative. It had taken months to negotiate an agreement with the two factions, which control the capital, whose fighters will escort trucks carrying food for the rival camp.
The ICRC was also able to berth a boat. Almost exactly at the same time, the American press was publishing several articles denouncing the use of "mercenaries" or "armed men" to protect the convoys and distribution centres. To "clear up all misunderstandings", the ICRC explained in a press release: 3,000 men (2,000 for the north of the city, 1,000 for the south), provided by clans and sub-clans, play in effect the role of "police force" in exchange for "a small quantity of food", which constitutes the "only way to successfully deliver assistance to the victims". More than ever, international organisations and humanitarian groups are also forced to "compromise". Something that involves taking on more and more risks.

'MSF France Somalia **Report** – March-April-May 1992' (in English).

Extract:

IV. Conclusion

The present situation can be seen as a transitional period. The military and political situation may be in a process of stabilization, food relief could finally begin to reach the population and the arrival of the UN and new NGOs can be interpreted as a positive step towards normalisation. Let us be optimistic and foresee optimistic prospects for the future of Somalis.

In that case, it is time for MSF to reconsider how best to adapt to the changing priorities:

• The emergency cases to the hospitals have decreased significantly and improvement in the economic situation should ease that process. Furthermore, the UN has planned to take over the support of the hospitals sooner or later. In the next three months, MSF will have progressively withdrawn from its involvement in this sector and will encourage the UN and major donors to assume this service (e.g. fuel supply, medical supply, maintenance, and surgical teams). The management and follow-up of the Benadir orthopaedic wards remains a major obstacle to our withdrawal plans from the surgical activities and possible solutions are being studied.

• The support of small health units must be continued in and out of Mogadishu until alternative, regular supplies can be insured by a government or other institution. This is especially necessary as long as the displaced population remains in a precarious situation.

• The vulnerable groups are presently the people who have fled from their original homes because of the war in the West (Bay, Bakool, and Gedo) and the South (Kismayo, Jilib and Brava). MSF is planning to implement a new programme in the Merka and Corrioley [Quoryooley] areas, where many of these displaced people are concentrated.

• Another priority, less evident but essential, is the necessity of insuring a proper water supply to the people of Mogadishu. The present poor hygienic conditions and the coming of the rainy season have considerably increased the risk of epidemic outbreaks of disease.

We were all very preoccupied with Somalia, the whole 'house' was all worked up over the subject. The debate was arduous, but I didn't take it as a fight for a supreme winner, for me it was a debate on the different arguments. There are numerous explanations for our slow action. There's the fact of not having food in sufficient quantity and that to set up nutritional centres there without a general distribution was not going to be very useful. There's also our being bogged down with the heavy burden of the surgical programme in Mogadishu, which uses up a lot of our energy and time. There's also a certain inertia in Paris and in me – I was deputy director of operations in 1992, and I was looking after Somalia directly – which gave me some discomfort. I was not making decisions all alone; I was discussing things with everybody. But we need to put ourselves back in the context: there was not one week that we didn't talk about evacuation and question our presence due to the armed guards. There were huge amounts of security incidents, a politico-military situation which was still very unstable. We were at the end of the battle of Mogadishu, with lots of deaths and a lot of surgery. We were questioning ourselves a lot about follow-up of the wounded. And then, there was the study, which people took as something that was holding back our action. But in my opinion, it held back very little because we didn't link our operations with the findings. What took us time was to react and to find the international staff to send to the field. It is clear that the limited numbers that we could send due to the security problems also held us back.

There were arguments between the field and Paris about this, each criticising the other for being a bit slow.

Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France, Programme Manager in Somalia until February 1992; then Deputy Director of Operations from March 1992, in charge of Somalia April-September 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

We were committed to this orthopaedic surgical programme and we were very reluctant to extend ourselves and disengage from it to undertake nutritional aid. We were working with armed guards in a security context that meant that Patrick[Vial] couldn't see us delivering food at all, because it was such a coveted commodity and that we were more or less sure of being attacked. In addition, we needed such quantities that it would be absolutely unmanageable. We were very, very, very, reluctant to start this nutritional programme. We were very uncomfortable as to how we were going to pull these people out of the crisis. We understood very well that MSF would not be able to do it alone. I remember well a meeting in Paris that Patrick was called back for, after his time in Somalia. He proposed to procure the food in the Somali markets to avoid having to negotiate directly. He was also very hesitant about switching the surgical programme to the nutritional programme. He was saying, 'A study needs to be done. But then I would want to wait for its findings before starting the programme.' And Brigitte Vasset was saying to him, 'We should do the nutrition study to mobilise people and to lobby in a way that substantiates our theory that there must be a massive relief effort for Somalia. It's through the study that we will succeed in proving this. But there is absolutely no question that we should wait for the findings of the study to open our nutritional programmes.' In fact Patrick did wait for the findings to be published, before opening the nutritional programme.

Anne Fouchard, MSF France, Communications Officer, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

We knew that nonetheless there were nutrition centres within our reach, but things were made more complicated due to the issue of security, the attacks on convoys, by the fact that we were blocked in Moga, and that we had the impression that we couldn't get out. This impression was no doubt exaggerated – with hindsight I believe everyone agrees on that. But it was difficult to force the hand of the team in Mogadishu, partly because it was psychologically difficult and then because at the time we weren't sure. This led to the serious amount of time that we lost, some months' worth.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Mid-June 1992, on his return from an exploratory mission in Baidoa, MSF France's Head of Mission, Patrick Vial, reported that the situation was worse there than in Merca. But due to a lack of human resources, it was decided to concentrate on the opening of programmes around Merca, while at the same time assuring procurement for Baidoa hospital and several dispensaries in the area.

Fax from Patrick Vial, MSF France Coordinator in Somalia, to Odile Delacotte, Programme Manager, MSF France, 12 June 1992 (in French).

Extract:
You will find attached a quick description of Baidoa and the hospital. I've never seen anything like it. Worse than Merca. We will do what we can within the limits of what is possible for us [...] The town fell into the hands of Siad Barre in Oct 1991 (SNF [Somali National Front]), was liberated by the USC (Aidid) on 26 April 92. The region has suffered enormous abuses by the SNF: thefts, looting (homes, cattle, agricultural equipment), assassinations, torture, rapes.
Current situation
The whole region (Bay-Bakool) is in a disastrous situation economically, agriculturally, climatically. The population has been deprived of all means of subsistence. Several million of them wander the streets of the town looking for some sort of food. Some are migrating towards Mogadishu (hoping to receive a food distribution). Many die on the way. Security = OK; risks will change when the food aid arrives. General malnutrition even more shocking than Merca and Qoryooley. ICRC just opened 12 wet kitchens in town: 10-12,000 meals per day (rice, beans, oil). General food distribution planned in the coming weeks (UN and ICRC). UNICEF just opened an 'office' in Baidoa – opening food centres next – huge needs. It is imperative to quickly open several feeding centres and MCH care [...]

MSF programme
Out of the question to intervene at the moment in Baidoa because we're starting operations in Merca and we're facing difficulties with our human resources as you know. MSF will thus continue to supply Baidoa's hospital, the Burhakaba and Wanlaweyn dispensaries, while waiting for better days when a mission can be eventually opened in the region. When it becomes possible, I'll make a tour of the aforementioned three regions to better understand the general situation in this part of Somalia.

On 26 June 1992, during a meeting of the Board of Directors of MSF France, a debate unfolded on the operational strategy in Somalia, and particularly on the relevance and capacity of the organisation to undertake large-scale food aid distributions.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 26 June 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Horn of Africa (Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, [Deputy diretor of operations]): On top of the conflicts affecting Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, comes a significant famine in the south of Somalia, to the east of Ethiopia and north of Kenya, where the nomadic populations are heavily affected. The Horn of Africa currently represents the largest emergency, there are around 100 MSFers there, taking care of 40,000 children.
Somalia: One million people displaced, 500 children dying per day, three million people in the throes of malnutrition. It was decided not to undertake a food convoy due to security and knowhow issues. Somali refugees are present in all the neighbouring countries: in Yemen (25,000 refugees); in Ethiopia, 20,000 children are being cared for

by the Belgian, Dutch and French sections; an MSF France team has arrived recently in the south of Ethiopia to assist the displaced.
Kenya: the increases in Somali refugees have surpassed all predictions; the current number of 300,000 refugees could reach a million before the end of the year. The Dutch, Belgian, and French teams are working in difficult conditions: no agreement with the Kenyan government and a chronic lack of food, resulting in significant mortality.
Yemen: 50,000 Somali refugees currently find themselves in the country. The government has put a brake on arrivals, blocking the disembarkation of many Somalis fleeing their country. A boat carrying 4,000 refugees in a state of total exhaustion recently ran aground on a beach where MSF set up a new site. This situation is expected to become more dramatic. MSF and UNHCR are preparing a camp for 50,000 people. Information on the delivery of food throughout the region is contradictory and confusing. UNHCR will do a study to try to clarify the situation. A press campaign is underway to raise the alarm among the public and donors. Even if the problem doesn't reverberate in the media, concern does seem to be growing.
Pierre de Rancourt [Board member] draws attention to the paradox of MSF's medical and surgical action undertaken in the middle of people suffering malnutrition.
Marc Gastellu [-Etchegorry] points out that withdrawal of the surgical programme has started but that a food distribution programme would be extremely difficult and dangerous.
Bernard Pécoul [General Director], who recently returned from Kenya, acknowledges the palliative action undertaken by MSF in this area, but due to the scale of the situation, he believes that our role of speaking out and creating pressure remains more effective. The situation should improve somewhat, but not so in Somalia, where moving food around remains problematic, in testing security conditions.
Jean-Christophe Rufin [Board member] points out that the famine problem will soon expand into southern Africa. It seems to him that the decision whether to involve ourselves in a food assistance activity should be taken by the Board.
Jean-Jacques Gabas [Board member] wonders if MSF could not play the role of catalyst with regard to gathering donors into groups based on their interest in specific regions.
Xavier Emmanuelli [Honorary President of MSF France] thinks that the time has perhaps come for MSF to learn how to do food assistance operations.
François Jean [Director of Studies at the MSF France Foundation] is of the thinking that the real problem in Somalia is the absence of operators.
Jean-Christophe Rufin, agreeing with Xavier Emmanuelli, questions what our real speciality is, and under what conditions we fulfil it. Awareness-raising among donors will be all the more important if MSF gains credibility in food aid actions. For Pierre de Rancourt it is urgent that MSF overcomes its weaknesses in this area and stops hiding behind the enormity of the problem. Jean-Jacques Gabas wishes that we learn from the experience of our operations in Mali, which gave MSF proof of their effectiveness.
Marc Gastellu [- Etchegorry] urges against the belief that MSF has, purely and simply, refused to commit to food operations. He believes what's important are localised activities, small-scale (which by the way have already been achieved) and reflection based on each individual situation. A show-off activity such as 'organising a journalist field visit' does not seem well founded.
Bernard Pécoul reminds us that for MSF today, taking care of 40,000 malnourished children is a first.
Jean-Christophe Rufin is less optimistic: in his opinion the threshold for a general distribution has not been reached [only] due to reasons of mindset.
Antoine Crouan [director of communication and fund-raising] thinks that only action by the UN can help Africa; MSF must create pressure.

Jean-Luc Nahel [Secretary General of Board of Directors] concludes, proposing that the words "MSF doesn't know what to do" be expunged from the language of MSF.

I recall a debate about how to intervene in Merka. Some people were saying that it wouldn't achieve anything because there was no general distribution there. Jean-Christophe Rufin (Board member) had proposed, 'Why don't we do the general distribution?' We were stuck in our positions, due particularly to the death of an ICRC logistician that we knew well, during a food distribution in 1991. After this death, the ICRC completely changed all its plans for food distribution. We were on edge due to this and our weak operational capacity. Moreover we knew that the ICRC was gaining strength, and that it was better equipped than us for a general distribution. So there was this debate, and it was our very conservative position that won out.

Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France, Programme Manager in Somalia until February 1992; then Deputy Director of Operations from March 1992, in charge of Somalia April-September 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Meanwhile, on 18 June 1992, MSF issued an alert on the critical situation of the Somali refugees who were flooding into the refugee camps in Kenya, where aid was arriving too slowly and in very insufficient quantities.
On 6 July, an MSF Belgium team was the subject of an armed attack and kidnapping lasting several hours in the Hagadera camp. The camps in this area, close to the border, were attacked nearly every night.
On 20 July, in protest, MSF Belgium announced that it would pull its teams out of the Liboi, Ifo, Hagadera and Dagahaley camps, noting that the incident affected the security of not only the international staff but also the refugees. On 26 July, having won police protection from the Kenyan government for the teams and for its humanitarian convoys, MSF recommenced its activities in the camps.

'Medical Charity says Africans Dying due to Indifference', **Reuters** (UK), Brussels, 18 June 1992 (in English).

Extract:
The medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Thursday Africans were dying daily in remote camps in northern Kenya because the world's response to pleas for aid for drought victims has been slow and inadequate. "The famine is continuing to kill in Kenya. Every day, dozens of small bodies have to be buried," MSF said, noting children were dying first but adults also were affected. "MSF is worried that this human tragedy has hardly mobilised the opinion of the public and governments in Europe," it added in a statement.
Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, launching the East African nation's first appeal for international help after 20 months of drought, this month said a million people in four provinces had been hit by serious famine. Moi said a recent influx of 460,000 refugees from war-torn neighbours Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia were fuelling the crisis.
United Nations officials said hundreds more refugees were arriving each day, fleeing war and the worst drought the Horn of Africa has seen since 1984. MSF said a flight carrying

another 30 tonnes of food and medical aid, to try to help stem the daily death toll in the camps, would take off from Belgium on Thursday.

'MSF Places its Medical Activities on Standby to Call for Increased Protection of Aid Workers and Refugees', **Press Release**, MSF, Nairobi, 20 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
In the face of widespread banditry and violence in Somali refugee camps in northeastern Kenya, Médecins Sans Frontières calls on the UNHCR and the international community to help the Kenyan authorities ensure better security in the Liboi, Ifo, Hagadera and Dagahaley camps. About 120,000 refugees, of whom 20 percent are children under five, are currently living in the four camps.
MSF has decided to withdraw its entire medical staff of 24 from the camps until further security measures are taken. Medical personnel is on standby in Nairobi for emergencies and in the camps, five technicians are running a minimum program of children's supplementary food and medical supply.
In the last few weeks, relief workers from MSF and other organizations have fallen victim to an increasing number of armed attacks and in some cases to physical violence. Food stocks of children's feeding centers have been looted and roads between refugee camps have become very dangerous for relief workers and refugees alike.
Earlier this month, MSF called for urgent security measures following the violent attack on its team of nine in the Hagadera camp. Despite police reinforcements in the camps, MSF is most concerned with the general security in the area.

'Relief Work Resumes in Refugee Camps', **Reuters** (UK), 26 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
An international relief group said Friday it was resuming its activities in Somali refugee camps in northeastern Kenya following assurances that the government would provide increased security. Médecins Sans Frontières said in a statement it had suspended some of its projects in the region after its workers were attacked on several occasions by armed bandits. The group announced in early July that a Belgian medical team had been held hostage and robbed at gunpoint in Hagadera. The Kenyan government has agreed to provide police protection for MSF teams and humanitarian convoys and to step up security in high-risk zones, the statement said.

On 5 July 1992, four of the planned 47 UN observers arrived in Mogadishu. On 10 July, the arrival of the remaining observers was reported, following opposition voiced by General Aidid, who accused the UN of bringing in arms by aircraft for his enemy, Ali Mahdi. On 20 July, an agreement was finally reached for the deployment of 51 ceasefire observers and 500 armed UN soldiers to protect food convoys.

'U.N. Ceasefire Observers to Deploy in Somali Capital', **AFP** (France), David Chazan, Nairobi, 20 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Forty-seven United Nations truce observers will go to Somalia's capital this week after one of Mogadishu's two warring factions dropped its opposition to the plan, U.N. special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun said Monday. General Mohamed Farah Aideed had warned that his fighters would stop the unarmed observers entering war-shattered Mogadishu after a plane bearing a U.N. emblem allegedly flew arms and money to his enemy interim President Ali Mahdi Mohamed [...]
Both sides have agreed in principle to the deployment of 51 observers to monitor the truce and 500 armed U.N. troops to protect desperately needed food convoys for the famine-stricken Horn of Africa country where hundreds are believed to be starving to death daily. Four observers went to Mogadishu earlier this month. But 10 days ago Aideed said his forces would stop others joining them after a Russian plane, which had been chartered by the U.N. to fly relief supplies to Somalia, made an unauthorised flight to Mogadishu allegedly carrying banknotes and weapons for Ali Mahdi. The U.N. denied involvement, saying the plane had returned to the Somali capital after completing its U.N. mission. But the observers' departure was delayed pending negotiations with Aideed, who had always been reluctant to see foreign soldiers in Somalia, though Ali Mahdi, weaker militarily, had welcomed the idea.

On 9 July 1992, the ICRC launched a new aid appeal to save the Somalis from famine. On 15 July, the United Nations appealed to the generosity of donor states on behalf of all the people of the Horn of Africa.
For its part, MSF France launched a new awareness-raising campaign on the famine in Somalia, targeting the general public and decision-makers. A meeting was organised with ambassadors in Paris representing the countries likely to be interested in the Somali crisis, the focus of a renewed appeal for broad support by the United Nations. The search began in France and the United States for media people who might visit Somalia with MSF to give visibility to the crisis.
Dominique Martin, the new Programme Manager for Somalia, stated to the daily newspaper, *Le Monde*, that in some places the people are so reduced to skin and bones that it resembles a concentration camp. She also reported that MSF is obliged to employ armed guards because convoys without protection are being attacked. She deplored the international community's indifference.

'Red Cross says Many Somalis will Die without Aid', **Reuters** (UK), Aidan Hartley, Nairobi, 9 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
"It's one of the worst crises I've ever seen," ICRC director-general Peter Fuchs told reporters in Nairobi after visiting the Somali capital Mogadishu. Thousands have died of hunger since Somalia was plunged into anarchy following the overthrow of dictator Mohamed Syad Barre by rebels 16 months ago, ICRC officials said. With malnutrition running as high as 80 per cent, thousands more were "almost condemned to die" even if relief efforts were stepped up now, Fuchs added. [...]

Fuchs said his group had borne most of the burden for Somalia until now -- the operation is the largest the ICRC has ever mounted and represents about a quarter of its world budget -- and said the United Nations now had to move in on a larger scale.
"We do feel there's a huge political and humanitarian vacuum the U.N. needs to fill," said Peter Stocker, head of the ICRC in Somalia. [...] Stocker estimated that 30,000 people were killed or wounded in a power feud between the warlords that erupted in November. Several different clan feuds are still being fought in the north and south of Somalia.
The unarmed military observers are seen as a vital support to relief efforts to distribute food to Mogadishu's 1.2 million people, hundreds of whom are dying each day.

'U.N. Calls on Donor Countries to Give for the Horn of Africa', **AFP** (France), Geneva, 15 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
The United Nations called on donor countries Wednesday to give 541 million dollars for the Horn of Africa. U.N. Humanitarian Affairs Director Charles Lamuniere described the region as being in "a state of extraordinary torment." It was the United Nations' second appeal in six months for the region, which the organization would like to supply with 1.2 billion dollars' worth of aid this year. [...]
Lamuniere said 23 million people's lives were threatened in the region, and that between 500 and 1,000 people died every day of hunger or disease.

'SOMALIA: As the Famine Worsens Humanitarian Organisations Cry Out in Alarm', ***Le Monde*** (France), Isabelle Vichniac, Geneva, 16 July 1992 (in French).

Extract:
On Sunday 12 July, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) launched an appeal urging the United Nations and the international community to save the Somalis, victims of famine, from certain death. "People in the tens if not hundreds of thousands will die in the coming weeks," stated Dr Dominique Martin, manager of the aid programme to Somalia, to AFP (France). The nutritional situation, drastic in Mogadishu, is no less so in the southern provinces, where MSF began to work three weeks ago. In the town of Baidoa, 200 km from the capital, malnutrition "affects 90 per cent of children under five years of age". In some places, "it feels like you're in a concentration camp, the people are that wasted away," added the MSF representative.
Hoping that "the UN gets more involved in Somalia, through its observers but also more comprehensive assistance", Dr Martin deplored the apparent indifference of the international community, "which is preoccupied with elsewhere, Yugoslavia and the Near East". Like ICRC, MSF's teams are forced to recruit 'armed guards' to prevent being attacked by armed robbers. "Those convoys not protected are attacked," added Dr Martin.
The recent decision by the UN to postpone sending military observers to Mogadishu, following accusations regarding weapons trafficking by airplanes sporting the UN insignia (*Le Monde*, July 11), reinforced the concerns of humanitarian organisations.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 21 July 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Horn of Africa: Breakfast with the ambassadors: 13 high-level representatives came to hear our renewed call for broad support of the UN action in the region. They were given a letter signed by Rony [Brauman, MSF France president of board of directors], along with the press kit; the letter also sent to all those who were not able to attend the breakfast.
Somalia hearing in Washington: Rony's visit to Mogadishu has been delayed to allow him to attend the hearing on Somalia, which will take place in the House of Representatives in Washington tomorrow [...]
Promotional visit: Valerie and Elisabeth, assisted by Philippe, an intern, have the task of finding two or three media identities to accompany our president to Somalia, whose media appeal should help to rally interest in the general public. The visit is planned within the first fortnight of April if such identities are found.
USA: request to Chantal to organise a visit of American VIPs to Somalia.
Antenne 2 [French TV network]: faced for now with the impossibility of convincing the editors-in-chief of the opportunity for a report on Somalia and that they cover expenses, the trip (by their reporter) is cancelled. Should we work on this again to coincide with Rony's trip?

An Antenne 2 reporter returned from the Kenyan camps where she had seen people in the camps dying and it had completely shaken her. So she went to her editor-in-chief, saying, 'I must go to Somalia, I must go to Somalia.' And that's when the editor-in-chief replied to her, 'It's not the first time there's been drought in Africa.'

Anne Fouchard, MSF France, Communications Officer, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

It was for us the era of 'calling on the international community', so we were organising breakfasts with ambassadors and visits left and right with political leaders. Up till then, there was only Rony Brauman, the President, taking this type of approach, it wasn't manufactured.

Dr Brigitte Vasset, MSF France, Director of Operations, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 20 July 1991, Omar Arteh Ghalib, Interim Prime Minister of Somalia, called for humanitarian aid, and for the 47 UN observers anticipated in Somalia to be complemented with a 10,000-strong UN peacekeeping force.
In the second half of July in the United States, following the return of several politicians from Somalia, and the broadcast of a series of reports in the media, strong mobilising forces emerged for action to benefit the Somalis. Criticising the disparity between the attention directed to the crisis in ex-Yugoslavia, and to Somalia, supporters of action advocated for humanitarian assistance as much as for military deployment to protect its distribution.

'Senator Calls for Immediate U.N. Troop Dispatch to Somalia', **Associated Press** (AP) (USA), David Briscoe, Washington, 22 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Both Kassebaum, a Kansas Republican, and Rep. Bill Emerson, R-Ohio, urged a stronger U.S. and international response to a crisis U.S. aid official Andrew Natsios said Wednesday is killing as many people each day as are dying each month in the higher-profile Yugoslav conflict.
Assistant Secretary of State John R. Bolton strongly defended U.S. efforts to relieve suffering in the East African nation. Bolton said it is a misconception that U.S. officials are paying too little attention to Somalia while focusing on less deadly crises elsewhere.
Tens of thousands of Somalis are believed to have died from malnutrition or factional fighting since the ouster of President Mohamed Siad Barre in January 1991. The Red Cross estimates that 1.5 million now are in danger of starvation. Kassebaum, who returned this week from a trip to Somalia, told the House Committee on Hunger that U.N. forces should be sent in whether warring factions agree or not.
Sending in troops would pose risks, she acknowledged, "but I believe it is a risk worth taking" to protect relief efforts by several international organizations. Bolton, speaking to the committee after Kassebaum, said an aide to the leader of one Somali faction had warned that if 50 U.N. observers were sent in "they should be sent with 50 coffins." Bolton said, however, that the first of a 50-member, unarmed U.N. force may be arriving this week in Mogadishu. The United Nations also is trying to get in a 500-member force to protect aid workers but is awaiting the approval of warring leaders.
Somalia's interim Prime Minister, Omar Arteh Ghalib, appealed Monday for 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers to protect mass feeding programs. But some rival leaders don't want U.N. assistance. Bolton said the United States is awaiting a report from U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali on what to do about the Somali crisis and is "prepared to move in the Security Council to take additional steps." "We need to move fast and have stressed this to the secretary general," Bolton said.
[...] Bolton said the United States has provided more relief to Somalia than any other country - $60 million this year. The committee chairman, Rep. Tony Hall, D-Ohio, praised American generosity but told Bolton: "It appears to me that you're holding back. I'd like to see the administration take the lead."

'The Hell Called Somalia', ***The New York Times*** (USA), 23 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
War, drought, the collapse of civil authority: these are the malign toxins that threaten the very existence of Somalia, a husk of a country on the Horn of Africa. As Jane Perlez of *The New York Times* reports, a third of Somalia's more than 4.5 million people are likely to starve to death within six months. A third of a country! [...]
Could more be done to stop the fighting and feed the famished? Absolutely. But fearing a quagmire, the big Western states have averted their gaze. And unlike the Ethiopian famine in 1984-1985, which also occurred during a civil war, there have been no Live Aid concerts, no chorus of pop stars singing "We Are the World." Granted, Somalia competes for the world's attention with the slaughter in Sarajevo, the plight of Iraqi Kurds, the life-threatening droughts elsewhere in Africa and a global AIDS plague. And diplomats have seized on the particulars of Somalia to justify an inadequate United Nations humanitarian effort. [...]

Citing this chaos as a pretext to do little, the Security Council voted to send only 50 unarmed U.N. military observers to monitor the cease-fire and speed the delivery of food and medicine. This token force was the most the Bush Administration felt it could prudently support. [...]
Some Americans, notably Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, favored sending 500 armed peacekeepers to back up the biggest-ever International Red Cross relief operation. But Somalia's agony underscores a more basic need: an effective, mobile U.N. peacemaking force, strong enough to quell the warlords.
Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has called for the formation of just such a force, consisting of volunteers, available on 48-hour call from U.N. members. But with the exception of France, the big Western powers have shown little interest in his suggestion. And George Bush, the New World President, has said nothing about this proposal, or about Somalia. Meantime, a third of a country inches toward the grave.

C. "MORE FOOD, NOT MORE TROOPS !"

On 22 July 1992, Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, spoke before the US Congress on the humanitarian situation in Somalia. He recommended a large-scale food aid operation. He also asserted that dispatching peacekeepers to protect the operation is not a priority. According to Rony, aid diversion is not a concern, because in a country so struck by famine any diverted food gets eaten anyway. One week later, Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Deputy Director of Operations, presented the same argument in his awareness-raising visit with political leaders in Washington.
Meanwhile, on 24 July, the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali reproached the Security Council for neglecting the "war of the poor" in Somalia for the "war of the rich" in ex-Yugoslavia. He recommended sending a technical team to Somalia to investigate the terms for putting in place a force for peacekeeping and for protecting humanitarian programmes, to be deployed in four regions. His proposal was adopted on 27 July by the Security Council, which demanded the urgent organisation of an airlift to deliver food aid.
On 30 July, Andrew Natsios, Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), also lobbied for a massive food distribution, secured by UN armed forces.
On 26 July, four Somali factions, including the USC, whose General Aidid declared the escort of humanitarian convoy escorts by UN forces unnecessary, recommended instead the creation of a national police force.
According to the French daily newspaper, *Le Monde*, Mohamed Sahnoun, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, in an as-yet unreleased report, was believed to be critical of the ineffectiveness of the UN with regard to the distribution of foodstuffs in Somalia, compared to the actions of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations.

'Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders **Statement** on the Humanitarian Tragedy in Somalia', presented to the Select Committee on Hunger, United States House of Representatives, July 22, 1992 (in English). **V7**

Extract:

I am speaking to you on behalf of the entire Médecins Sans Frontières movement, sharing the concerns of the volunteers working in the field, who despair over lack of support from the rest of the world. In Somalia, hunger is a killer more certain and more brutal than the war: in every village that we have seen, the entire population -- children, teenagers and adults -- has been affected. The famine has given us the unbearable spectacle of wasted skeletons wandering in search of a few grains of cereal in the unlikely hope that a passing truck has dropped some in its wake.

Médecins Sans Frontières, or Doctors Without Borders, has been present in Somalia since January 1991. Hundreds of volunteers (surgeons, anaesthesiologists, doctors, nurses, logistics experts) have served in relay teams in and around Mogadishu (Merka, Baidoa), but also in the north of the country, in Burao and Hargueisa, and in the South, in Kismayo. We have sent hundreds of tons of medicine, medical materials and therapeutic food to supply Somali health center structures, feeding centers, and hospital operating rooms.

We have been witness to the horrifying consequences of war, and then to the slow agony of millions of Somalis who had fled the war zone in an attempt to find a measure of safety and some food. Unfortunately, children pay the highest price in this famine. Our surveys have shown that more than a quarter of them have died, and the process is inexorably stepping up its pace. In the zones where Doctors Without Borders is working 40 to 70% of children under five years old are severely malnourished; it has become rare to find a Somali child with an acceptable nutritional level. If nothing is done to help them, three quarters of Somali children will die in the coming year. In the end, an entire generation may disappear.

In the field, volunteers from Médecins Sans Frontières, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Save the Children Fund are fighting with almost ridiculously limited means, given the immensity of needs. Their valiant efforts will be in vain if the international community does not immediately implement a vast food aid program. Without it, what will happen to the children that we are "curing" when they leave our feeding centers and find nothing? How do we keep up the energy and commitment of the volunteers -- both local and expatriate -- if there is no food aid to prolong their efforts?

Given the enormity of this tragic situation, non-governmental organizations cannot stem the tide of events alone. This is why we are making this urgent appeal to whoever will listen: only massive and sustained food aid to Somalis can keep this tragedy from turning into a human catastrophe of unprecedented proportions.

Recommendations:

• Provide international organizations such as the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross with the financial and material means to move a large-scale food aid operation. In order to reach the most needy populations it is imperative to flood the country with food, so that it ceases to be a high-stakes item, stolen by those with weapons. Only by making food readily available will it be possible to ease the tensions caused by shortages, the principal obstacle to relief operations.

• Agree to accept a relaxation of controls and certain losses during food distribution. In the current situation, where it is impossible to tell the difference between a person who is hungry and a person who is dying of hunger, diversion of food aid is of secondary concern. The food that we think is being stolen is neither hoarded nor resold: it is eaten

by whoever has it. When a certain level of saturation has been reached, controls can be tightened. Over our 21 years of experience, we have always observed this evolution in areas struck by famine.
• The presence of peace-keeping troops mandated by the UN should no longer be considered a priority or a prerequisite. Only massive food aid will allow for a reduction of tensions and lessen the attacks on humanitarian aid convoys. The arrival of Blue Helmets without sufficient quantities of food will not assure the protection of humanitarian teams. Furthermore, the deployment of these troops risks diverting financial resources, which are so desperately needed in Somalia today.

'UN Chief Setting Own Agenda, Proposes Massive Operation for Somalia', **AP** (USA), Victoria Graham, United Nations, 24 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
In his first major international initiative U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Friday proposed a massive relief and peacekeeping operation for the bloodied, starving nation of Somalia. [...]
In his report, he called for an urgent airlift to the Somali interior, saying millions are threatened with starvation because of tribal and clan warfare and lack of government. He said he would dispatch a technical team to Somalia as soon as possible to study the feasibility of expanding U.N. operations into four regions around the country [...]
On Thursday, Boutros-Ghali admonished the council for trying to expand U.N. peacekeeping in Bosnia without consulting him first, and said Somalia was equally in need of help and had received far less [...]
About 1.5 million of the 8 million Somalis are in danger of starving in the next few weeks and another 4.5 million need assistance, according to Gen. Mohammed Sahnoun, the U.N. special representative for Somalia. The secretary-general called for four operational U.N. zones: In Berbera in the northwest, Bossasso in the northeast, Mogadishu, the central range lands, and Kismayo in the south.
In each zone a consolidated U.N. operation would carry out four major tasks: Humanitarian activities, emergency relief and rehabilitation; cease-fire monitoring and containment of potential conflicts; security, demobilization and disarmament of armed factions and national reconciliation.
A decentralized approach, he said, will improve the efficiency of humanitarian operations and will be able to use the ports or Kismayo, Bossasso and Berbera for food imports. But many of the most destitute people live in the interior and not accessible form the ports. "The mounting of an urgent airlift operation may be the only way to reach those areas and should be undertaken as soon as possible," he said.

'Bush, U.N. Face Pressure to Aid War-Torn Somalia', ***The Washington Post*** (USA), Shari Rudavsky, 27 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Congressional pressure is mounting to send U.N. peacekeeping troops to guard relief shipments into Somalia, a country devastated by war and drought. But the United States and the United Nations are caught between the desire to feed thousands of starving Somalis and the prospect that sending U.N. guards will exacerbate fighting in the country and endanger the peacekeeping troops. [...]

The United States and the United Nations have steered clear of entering the Somali fray, saying conditions there are not conducive to outside intervention. Many U.S. legislators say the United States has a moral obligation to take the lead in the international movement to help Somalia. Twice this spring the Senate called upon President Bush to lead an international effort to aid peace negotiations and provide relief. There is a resolution pending in the House calling for increased State Department efforts to help the country.

At a meeting of the House Select Committee on Hunger last week, Assistant Secretary of State John R. Bolton said the administration has "vigorously urged" the United Nations to begin relief and peace-making efforts in Somalia. Bolton added that because of the many factions warring in Somalia, "an enduring cease-fire is essential" before further action is taken.

But some members of Congress and those involved with the international relief effort contend this is not enough. Select Committee Chairman Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio) told Bolton Wednesday: "We want to see the administration take more of a lead on this. It appears to us you're holding back." Officials from relief organizations working in the country agree that the United Nations should send forces to Somalia, but they add that sending food to the thousands of starving Somalis should be the top priority. "It is imperative to flood the country with food, so that it ceases to be a high-stakes item, stolen by those with weapons. Only by making food readily available will it be possible to ease the tensions caused by shortages," said Rony Brauman, President of Doctors Without Borders, which has had volunteers in Somalia since January 1991.

Death has become a way of life for the Somalis, particularly the younger generation, Brauman testified Wednesday. One-quarter of the children under 5 have died in the past year, mostly in the past three months, as drought and famine conditions have become more severe, he said. "If we continue this way, probably a whole generation will be gone within the year," he said.

'Aid Group Says Somalia Needs Food Before Security', **AP** (USA), Carl Hartman, Washington, 29 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:

Dr. Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, deputy director of Doctors Without Borders, estimated that Somalia, which imported half its food even in peaceful times, needs 70,000 tons a month. About 17,000 to 25,000 tons is now being shipped by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the U.N. World Food Program, he said.

He thinks it futile to expect a fair distribution until 70,000 tons starts to arrive. Until then, men with guns will get the lion's share of the food. "There are two kinds of hungry people in Somalia, the kind with guns and the kind without guns," he said. "The ones with guns have to eat too." He acknowledged that much of the aid sent to Somalia is being looted. "If you had a gun and a hungry family, what would you do?" he asked.

At least one of the leaders of an armed clan has opposed sending armed U.N. "blue helmets" to the country. Dr. Gastellu-Etchegorry said that of Somalia's 8.5 million people, 1.5 million have been displaced in 18 months of fighting and are badly undernourished, with about 600 children under five dying every day. "Maybe 25 percent of the children have already died," he said. An additional 3 million people are in what he called an extremely precarious situation.

He acknowledged that his crew of 20 in Somalia - doctors, nurses, nutritionists and others - would welcome more security. But the sending of armed U.N. personnel should

not be at the expense of food shipments, he said. He spoke in an interview in Washington, where he had been seeing officials in an attempt to garner more U.S. aid. The food is available, he said, and the first needs are planes for an airlift and money to charter sea transport.

'Somalia: the UN Security Council Tasks a Technical Team with Preparing a Major Humanitarian Operation', ***Le Monde*** (France), Afsané Bassir-Pour, New York, 29 July 1992, (in French).

Extract:
For diplomats, the resolution adopted Monday by the Security Council is a first step to putting into practice an "obligation of humanitarian intervention" in Somalia, a country devastated by civil war and where 4.5 million people's lives are threatened by famine. [...]
Although the Council qualifies Mr Boutros-Ghali's proposal as "very ambitious", it approved his report and adopted a resolution for a "very large humanitarian operation". Its 15 members are "seriously alarmed" by the deterioration of the situation and underline the fact that it is urgent that humanitarian aid be delivered rapidly throughout all of Somalia. The Council asked the secretary general to urgently organise an airlift, and summoned all the parties of the conflict to "fully respect the security and safety" of personnel of the UN and other organisations with a humanitarian mission.
Putting aside "good intentions", the Council has for now only given concrete approval for dispatch of a technical team under the direction of the special representative of Mr Boutros-Ghali, the Algerian diplomat Mohamed Sahnoun. In a report yet to be published, Mr Sahnoun has criticised the ineffectiveness of the efforts of UN personnel with regard to food distribution in Somalia, "while the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations manage to make it work".
Visibly exasperated by the humanitarian situation in the country, Council members are threatening, for the first time, to take "other measures" to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. According to a western diplomat who calls the resolution "Kouchnerian", the Security Council is determined to "assist the Somali people by all available means". Mr Sahnoun is believed to have also asked for the help of the French Minister of Health and humanitarian actors to create an airlift to take in foodstuffs.
UN diplomats note that, since the vote on resolution 688 regarding humanitarian aid for the Kurd population in Iraq, "countries are demanding more and more humanitarian interventions". [...]
Four armed Somali factions, including General Mohamed Farrah Aidid's United Congress of Somalia, gathered on Sunday 26 July in Bardhere in the south of the country, consider unnecessary a UN force to escort humanitarian aid convoys, according to their statements to AFP and the BBC. These factions have called on the UN to assist in the creation of a 6000-strong national police force to restore security.

'AID Official Criticizes U.N.-Proposed Food Airlifts for Somalia', **AP** (USA), David Briscoe, Washington, 31 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Andrew Natsios, Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, said the war-torn country is so chaotic that no food shipments are safe from theft. [...] Proposals to airlift food by helicopter would not make shipments any

safer and are likely do little to get food to starving people in the chaotic northeast African country, the [US]AID official said. Natsios spoke in an interview after a Senate hearing in which he testified on both Somalia and the deadly drought that is strangling much of southern Africa. The need for food is so great - 15,000 tons more a day - that only ground deliveries guarded by armed troops will be effective, Natsios said. [...]
Sens. Paul Simon, D-Ill., and Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., who questioned witnesses at the hearing, drafted a congressional resolution Friday calling for immediate deployment of U.N. security guards to protect food shipments in Somalia. The resolution, signed by 29 other senators, condemns the killing of at least 30,000 people by political factions in Somalia. Kassebaum, who was in Somalia two weeks ago, told Natsios that she agreed with his view of the effectiveness of helicopter airlifts. She said the most urgent need is for an armed U.N. security force, which she said should be sent in whether or not warring Somali clan leaders agree.

Our idea was to impose nothing by force and to use as our starting point the analysis that aid convoys were targets because their monetary and market value were higher due to their rarity. The idea being to increase this aid, for a cost that was really very minimal, because it involved the staples of emergency food aid, or porridge: flour, sugar, milk, oil. We explained that this was what was needed everywhere: 'We're not taking control of it, we're not trying to channel it in a particular direction, we're taking action at the economic level by making the market value drop and thus guaranteeing security by making products ubiquitous again.' So I took my proposition further, saying we should take it to saturation level, by bringing in extremely large quantities. We were a bit against the tide, but far from being out on our own because ICRC and World Vision, which had had Andrew Natsios, at the time Assistant Administrator of [one of] USAID [offices], as President, were also calling for massive aid... and it's rare that MSF agrees with World Vision. We were strongly convinced of our legitimacy and the strong basis of what we proposed. With hindsight, my regret today, still, is that this option wasn't taken up. Of course no one can guarantee that it would have worked and that it would have set off a sort of vicious cycle – it's out of the question to assert that. But what is sure is that what was done only aggravated things. What followed really triggered a vicious cycle [instead].

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 4 August 1992, following an exploratory mission and the opening of nutrition centres in the Brava region, MSF drew media attention to the situation in the coastal towns south of Mogadishu. The organisation reiterated the pressing necessity to launch a massive food distribution operation.

'Population Decimated by Famine on the Somali Coast', **Press Release**, MSF International, Brussels, 4 August 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Most of the population has already died from hunger, disease and war in the coastal cities south of Mogadishu, where almost no food aid has so far been delivered. A Médecins Sans Frontières team who travelled the 170 km stretch of road between Brava,

a town of 40,000 people south of Mogadishu, and Gilib, reports that villages have been largely destroyed. "The few who have survived are now too weak to seek help" a team member said.
On the way to Gilib, they came across groups of people fleeing attacks on their villages. They survive on leaves, roots, and rain water. Many dead bodies lie on the sides of the road. In the next few days, Médecins Sans Frontières is to open therapeutic feeding centres for children in Brava, where malnutrition reaches the most alarming levels among residents and an estimated 10,000 displaced persons. Another nutrition centre will also be opened in the neighbouring village of Sablale, where 5,000 displaced persons have taken refuge.
This latent survey further proves the need for a large-scale emergency food aid operation for Somalia. Donor countries must urgently provide international organisations such as the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross with all necessary means to launch such an operation. Unless large amounts of food are made readily available in Somalia, widespread insecurity will prevent relief agencies from reaching the most needy populations.
Non-governmental organisations alone cannot cope with four million people, on the verge of starvation. In the face of such a human catastrophe, the presence of UN peace-keeping troops should no longer be a prerequisite for the sending of food. Somalia needs food first and it needs it now.

On 9 August 1992, in an interview with the French daily newspaper *Le Monde*, Mohamed Sahnoun, the UN special representative in Somalia, stated that it was possible to avoid resorting to force.

'Interview with the UN Special Envoy: "Recourse to Force can be Avoided," Declared Mr Mohamed Sahnoun', ***Le Monde*** (France), Betrand Legendre, 9 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The same Council resolution envisages a recourse to force if the international aid is not distributed under satisfactory conditions. Do you have the feeling that it will come to that?
If it emerges that it is necessary, yes, because it's a matter of saving human lives. I believe, however, that a recourse to force can be avoided, because the situation is not the same as that prevailing in the territory of ex-Yugoslavia. There is not conflict, on a large scale, between the different clans that have shared out the country. Each group controls a distinct territory, which corresponds in size close enough to its aspirations. This is the status quo. The real problem is the problem of banditry, of gangs that steal a part of the humanitarian aid to provide for themselves and their families. The solution to this problem would be to drop 60 to 70 per cent of this humanitarian aid into the local markets at a low price, making them responsible for commercialising it. This is how you would restart the economy at the same time as putting off the looters. Some traders are not as angered by things, by these thefts, as they are exasperated by the competition created by the humanitarian organisations distributing their foodstuffs for free. If there had to be recourse to force it would be the first time that the United Nations would intervene to guarantee the delivery of humanitarian assistance. It wouldn't mean a force

tasked with keeping the peace, as has been seen elsewhere, but with ensuring that the help reaches its destination.

MSF France worked hard to develop relationships with other NGOs and the United Nations, so as to increase the pressure and awareness vis-à-vis the Somali crisis. It made plans for a media campaign and to dispatch a Somali-recognised media person to Somalia.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 12 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Somalia: Decisions of the operations meeting on Tuesday

• Departure of Marc Gastellu[-Etchegorry, Deputy Director of Operations] for Mogadishu at the end of the week to study, with the field coordinator there (Patrick Vial), our potential for extending our programmes in Somalia. (Marc's duties will include informing Patrick of the sensitivities within HQ regarding the mission.)

• Departure as soon as possible of a highly experienced logistician to conduct investigations on the ground into possible large-scale logistical interventions.

• Rapid dispatch of a doctor to support the local medical coordination so that it can evaluate opportunities for intervention in new locations.

• Establishment in Mogadishu of an inter-organisational secretariat for those organisations currently active in Somalia. Its purpose: to gather, centralise, and monitor information on the situation in Mogadishu and in all the accessible regions from the centre to the south.

• Continued emphasis on lobbying. The idea that needs to be explored is to bring together in Europe, between now and the end of August, all the different NGOs currently intervening in Somalia to jointly investigate ways of pressuring their respective governments. Getting closer to the UN (for example, making sure that the members of the Security Council receive our briefing documents on the situation in the region).

• Further efforts underway of targeting *Paris Match* and its publishers, Filipacchi, regarding the proposal to create a campaign on Somalia by opening a bank account for subscriptions by its readers. Sending a showbiz star into the field could strengthen the campaign.

[...] We are going to contact the managing director of *Ouest-France* [provincial daily] to propose he visits our missions in Somalia and launches a fundraising campaign targeting his readers.

On 12 August 1992, an agreement was signed between representatives of the Somali factions and Mohamed Sahnoun, UN special representative in Somalia, authorising the deployment of 500 Pakistani 'Blue Helmets' to Mogadishu. Sahnoun called on the international community again to establish an airlift to carry international aid into Somalia.

'Agreement on the Advent of 5,000 Blue Helmets in Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), 12 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
An agreement on the deployment to Mogadishu's port and international airport of 500 Blue Helmets for protection of humanitarian operations was signed by "all Somali leaders", announced the United Nations representative in Somalia, Mohamed Sahnoun, on Wednesday in Nairobi.
[...] The 500 armed UN soldiers, who could be deployed "within two to three weeks", according to Mr Sahnoun, must ensure the security of operations to unload the humanitarian aid at the Somali capital's port and airport, and of the aid convoys on their way to warehouses and distribution centres in Mogadishu.
"This is a highly significant step that should help resolve the security problems in Mogadishu and speed up assistance to the starving population, but also for the hospitals and health centres that have been looked after by non-governmental organisations (NGOs)," said Mr Sahnoun, who for several weeks negotiated with the different parties to the Somali conflict for the 500 soldiers to be able to go in [...]
Mr Sahnoun called on the international community to organise "an airlift like that for Ethiopia" in 1984-85, on foreign countries to commit to bilateral aid, and cited the example of France, which within one week shipped a cargo load to Mogadishu and sent two airplanes carrying humanitarian aid to Baidoa (in the southwest).

By mid-August 1992, the international mobilisation to assist the Somalis had grown in scale. The UN World Food Programme announced that without massive aid, 1.8 million people were threatened with starving to death, and organised an airlift. In turn, ICRC declared that the only way to eliminate insecurity was to send in increasing amounts of food aid.

'International Mobilisation Underway for Starving Somalia', **AFP** (France), Jean-Pierre Campagne, Nairobi, 17 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The White House announced its plan to provide 145,000 tonnes of food aid "as soon as possible", and an initial team of 33 American soldiers is expected to arrive on Monday in the coastal town of Mombasa (east of Kenya) to set up the necessary logistical structure for delivering the aid in Somalia. Equally, France announced Monday that it was organising a 10-day airlift from Wednesday to transport 200 tonnes of food for the people of Baidoa (southwest Somalia) and its surrounds, who are particularly suffering from hunger. Great Britain also decided Sunday to grant 18 million pounds (approximately 180 million francs) of emergency supplementary aid to starving Somalis.
Italy, the former protectorate power, which had quickly abandoned all thought of diplomatic intervention between the fracturing Somali clans, declared Sunday that it was ready to send a representative to Mogadishu "to promote dialogue between the parties involved". On Thursday, Rome had announced the release of emergency aid comprised of foodstuffs and medicines to the value of US$20 million. Even Israel, despite Somalia's membership in the Arab League, which does not recognise the Hebrew state, declared Sunday that it was prepared to expedite foodstuffs and medicines to Somalia. [...] This mobilisation is underway, as 500 Blue Helmets are soon due to arrive in Mogadishu to

be deployed to the port and the airport to ensure the security of humanitarian operations in the Somali capital [...] "The insecurity poses problems, it is true, but the only way to eliminate it is to bring in increasing amounts of food aid," asserted a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Monday.
The ICRC has established 400 collective wet kitchens throughout the country. On Monday, one of its shipments arrived in Mogadishu port, comprised of 2,000 tonnes of food aid and a helicopter to deliver the aid to the town of Obbia, north of Mogadishu, which "is hard to reach by road", according to the ICRC representative. The World Food Programme (WFP), having already delivered 3,000 tonnes of food to Kismayo port (in the south), began an airlift Saturday to deliver 5,000 tonnes in total to the inhabitants of Baidoa, destined to feed more than 200,000 people for four months.
However, many other regions of Somalia have not yet received aid, mostly because no humanitarian organisation works there due to lack of sufficient means or for reasons of security.

On 19 August 1992, following an exploratory mission, MSF France announced to the media that its teams have discovered a new "death zone" in the west of Somalia around Baidoa, Bardhere, Dinsoor, and Awdiinle, where the catastrophic situation demands immediate intervention.
With aid organisations streaming into Baidoa, MSF France chose to open nutrition centres in the isolated villages around the towns. The famine victims in the villages are treated on the spot, which avoids their having to take an often fatal journey elsewhere.

'**Fax** from Patrick Vial and Frederic Vigneau, MSF France in Somalia, to Anne Fouchard, Communications Officer', MSF France, 18 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Exploratory mission undertaken with the aim of gaining a general understanding of this region, which has suffered enormously from the war during these past 18 months. January 1991, Siad Barre's forces flee, [using a] 'scorched earth' policy. October 91 to May 92, return of and occupation by Siad Barre's forces. May-August 92, USC offensive (Aidid). So, a critical situation to deal with, compounded by the drought, collapse of the economic system, and total absence of public services [...] The whole region between Baidoa and Bardhere presents a desolate spectacle. The majority of the villages are deserted, destroyed, or burned down. Only the large towns remain inhabited, each with its share of displaced families in the thousands. Most of the farmers having lost everything, surviving on the outskirts of town in a desperate state. Many of them are now feeding on their clothes or their goatskin sacks. Water is cruelly absent, supplied once upon a time by motorised pumps, all having been destroyed during the war. The whole population drinks rainwater collected in ponds that soon dry out. All along the track there are the bodies of animals that have died of thirst and sometimes humans who weren't able to go any further. The scale of mortality is shocking. In each village that we visited, the cemetery grows by 10 to 20 new graves each day. The malnutrition rates speak loudly; of the 1,001 children under five years checked by MUAC, all were malnourished, 80% of them very severely, 13% severely, and 7% moderately. Ill with diarrhoea, respiratory infections, covered in galls [raised sores], these children, with an

absent look in their eyes, are destined for certain death if they don't receive medical/nutritional aid within the weeks to come.
This particularly affected region therefore needs an immediate intervention:
• Food aid in the villages (to prevent the displaced population concentrating in the urban centres)
• Reinstatement of the wells
• Medical/nutritional assistance, especially for the young children, who are the first victims in this desperate situation.

'Discovery of a "Mortuary Zone" in western Somalia', **Press Release**, MSF International, Brussels, 20 August 1992 (in English).

Extract:
The entire population is currently dying from starvation and disease in all the villages between Baidoa and Bardera in western Somalia. A Médecins Sans Frontières team, who carried out the first fact-finding mission in the area in months of war, expressed shock at the extreme gravity of the situation, "Horror has taken a step further here," a team member said. "Most villages are empty, destroyed or burnt down. Only larger villages are still inhabited; they now accommodate thousands of displaced families, farmers who have lost everything. Many of them eat their clothes or sheepskin bags. There is a dramatic shortage of water. People have to drink from ponds, which are gradually drying up. Dead bodies lay scattered on the dirt track - those that did not have the strength to keep walking."
The team reported appalling rates of mortality. In cemeteries, between ten and twenty new graves are dug daily. A quick nutritional survey showed that all children under five are malnourished, 80 percent very severely, 13 severely and 7 moderately. As they suffer from diarrhoea, serious [lung] infections and scabies, these children will certainly die unless urgent medical and nutritional aid is organized.
Médecins Sans Frontières plans to extend its current emergency operations to provide aid to the population of the [Baidoa] region. MSF already runs intensive feeding centres in the Merka and Kismayo regions. More than 100 expatriate volunteers are working with MSF in the Horn of Africa – Somalia-Kenya-Ethiopia-Yemen-Djibouti and the Sudan.

The famine was everywhere, but there were particular famine areas in Baidoa and the whole region southwest of Baidoa, the places where we established nutrition centres. I left for a fortnight with Fred Vigneau at the end of July, with some hesitation, to try to understand the movements of the population. It wasn't easy to move around in the country. Our trip was pretty rock-and-roll. It became clear that the whole of Somalia was affected. There were people movements towards the urban centres. We saw people reach Baidoa then fall like flies. We said to ourselves that we needed to try to prevent people from all coming to the same place, that the aid had to be decentralised. That fact that we, MSF, were first to go and set ourselves up in certain locations, erect TFCs [therapeutic feeding centres], must have also encouraged the other organisations to mount programmes complementary to ours. We were the first to go to the south of Baidoa, and ICRC followed, setting up kitchens. We did the same thing in Wajid and Hudur. We created these sort of "satellite sites" around Baidoa to limit everyone coming to Baidoa, because the influx of displaced people encouraged [other] agencies to come to Baidoa. This meant there was more food and more types of weapons to steal. Then by the month of August '92, the whole world started to know what was happening in Baidoa. All the agencies turned up in Baidoa with big planes and MSF, well, we didn't want

to get caught up in this sort of huge medical-humanitarian outpouring. It was completely macabre.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

It was decided that the Dutch section of MSF would open a programme within Baidoa town. It was the MSF Holland General Director, Jacques de Milliano, who dictated this intervention for the section, putting an end to months of blocking by certain people who considered it too dangerous. But within the French section, they were somewhat reluctant to accept what they perceived as a late intrusion in the Somali crisis, which they felt they had been dealing with alone since the start. To counter this opposition, Rony Brauman, President of MSF France's Board of Directors, visited Baidoa with his Dutch counterpart to formalise the establishment of the Dutch mission.
This mission was finally opened mid-September in the form of an emergency medical programme in the town of Baidoa, particularly in the hospital, in cooperation with the French section and the organisations CARE International, Concern, UNICEF, and ICRC.
It was agreed that the French section would be responsible for joint representation for the two MSF sections with regard to the various authorities in Mogadishu.

'**Proposal** Medical Emergency Programme, Somalia, MSF Holland', 16 September 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Summary: MSF Holland, in cooperation and coordination with MSF France, Concern, Care International, Unicef, and ICRC is proposing to implement an emergency medical programme in Baidoa town, one of the most affected areas in southern Somalia. The target population of this programme is the people of Baidoa town, who are suffering from severe malnutrition and dehydration. ??% part of the population is living just outside the town in camps. Total population of Baidoa is, at the moment, approximately 90,000 people.
The general objective of the programme is to reduce mortality and morbidity rates in the town of Baidoa. The planned activities of MSF Holland are also to open OPD services and feeding centres, carry out a nutritional and health survey, and improve the water & sanitation and shelter situation.

In terms of our operational deployment, there was a little problem. The programme managers of the French section absolutely wanted to be in Baidoa. There was a sort of movement within the section to own Somalia. For the French section, Somalia was a long story that had started in 1979, and even if there had been interruptions, it was a symbolic place for them. Above all, there was this deep commitment since the beginning of the war, all the risks taken, the wounded treated, etc. So they were saying, 'We're not going to let go of it now.' It's understandable, but it wasn't an argument that was acceptable. So I agreed with Jacques, whom I got on with very well, that we would go there together and that we would shake up MSF France, because I didn't agree at all with this opposition – which wasn't unan-

imous anyway, but what there was, was very strong. Baidoa is one of the three or four experiences I've had that have made me say, 'Famine reveals itself.' It was crazy! It was the point of convergence for people displaced for months, that really had nothing more to eat and who were already survivors. It was really hell! Once you were there, there was no discussion, it was 'Emergency! We have to be here, there is no argument of the French or Dutch that means anything, we're going in.' Anyhow, that's what happened and it worked out well, more or less.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

There was a lot of paralysis of many organisations because Somalia just had a bad reputation. But the civilian population can't help it! MSF Holland came also very late because of internal discussions. We were pushing to intervene but it was blocked for a long time by one of the project managers. His arguments were that it was too dangerous, not necessary. I was the Head of the Emergency Desk and I was angry. Jacques [de Milliano] became furious. Then he asked me to go to Somalia. We went together and we met Rony Brauman, MSF France President – at the top of the famine – the worst conditions. MSF was not in Baidoa yet. MSF France wanted to go to Baidoa but didn't have the capacity. In Mogadishu, we agreed that MSF Holland would do an explo mission to Baidoa and MSF France would support us with logistics and cars and protection because we didn't have anything there. And that's how Baidoa started. It was a gentleman's agreement between Jacques and Rony. In Paris, there were some reservations due to a lot of irritation that other MSF sections were too slow or too careful. MSF France took a lot of flak from the media because they were the ones that had to speak out and all the other MSF sections were sorry because they were not there. And maybe a lot of people thought, 'it is not true or it is overdone or what can we do?' It wasn't easy and Baidoa was a little hell on earth, but it had to be done.
An American organisation in Baidoa thought that they owned the hospital and they didn't allow anyone in the hospital. So we had to set up a separate hospital because what they did wasn't enough. A lot of MSF people were traumatised – it wasn't very pleasant to be there. The working conditions were extremely bad and it was very difficult to find personnel who would work there. I knew coordinators that would stay for three days. It was frightening. People would call me after three days and say, 'Well thank you but I'm going home.' And then I had to return again. I was based in Amsterdam and I was responsible for Somalia as Head of the Emergency Desk but I had to work there in Baidoa as coordinator myself for a few weeks because no one else wanted to do it. I am a nurse. There was no alternative.

Jules Pieters, MSF Holland, Emergency Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

On 30 July 1992, the European Union announced it will release six million ECUs (European Currency Unit, precursor to the euro) for emergency humanitarian assistance in Somalia, at the end of August 1992. The European Parliament resolution that brought about this aid mentioned that, according to MSF, three quarters of the children are suffering severe malnutrition.

'The European Commission to Approve New Humanitarian Aid of 6 million ECUs Next Week', **Resolution** from the European Parliament, 30 July 1992 (in English).

Extract:
The decision will be announced next week and will enable the Community to continue with its emergency programme, which has involved 9 million ECUs since the beginning of the year. To this must be added the normal food aid (36 million ECUs) and the additional aid (11 million), already decided on. In practice, it is the EC which is to a large extent funding the aid being distributed by the Red Cross and numerous other organisations, as well as the air lifts for transport [...]
1. Stresses the need to act particularly quickly to help the two million Somalis, among whom according to Médecins Sans Frontières, over three quarters of the children are already suffering from severe malnutrition.

Throughout the whole of August 1992, the media descended on Mogadishu in the wake of UN aid agencies and those from different nations beginning to bring massive food aid into Somalia. The famine coverage by the international press unleashed a veritable media spectacular, with the perverse effects quickly evident. The exaggerating of mortality statistics, particularly those referring to children, fed the escalating frenzy. Mohamed Sahnoun declared that 5,000 children were dying each day in Somalia. The results of MSF's surveys were used indiscriminately, extrapolating for the entire country the catastrophic situation that was revealed among a displaced population in a specific region. In addition, Andrew Natsios, assistant administrator in USAID, announced that 350,000 children had already died in Somalia, based on the study conducted by MSF of the displaced in five villages around Merca.
A large number of journalists used the MSF house as their base, transforming it into a press office, but not without problems for the team, which was already busy enough with its own activities.

'Eighteen Months of Indifference', ***Télérama*** (France), Thierry Leclère, 12 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia, January '91: Médecins Sans Frontières launched a number of SOS calls for Somalia. They don't make it into the news – people's televisions are fixed on the Gulf War. Today, the televisions finally revealed the hundreds of children who die each day. Two brief minutes [were allowed] on the television between the holiday exodus and the Olympic Games. The famine in Somalia slid onto our little screens like some monstrous film clip. A nightmare passed through the TV news blender. TF1 or Antenne 2 proclaimed figures as terrifying as they were unverifiable (23 million condemned to death in the whole Horn of Africa), before relegating the event to the black hole of JT [Journal télévisé/ TV news] from the following day onwards.
"The Somalis aren't very lucky: they're not white and their war, in deepest Africa, doesn't interest anyone. At least that's what the major media outlets think. Somalia, it's far, it's expensive, it's complicated. In short, it doesn't sell itself." The passionate [honorary] President of Médecins Sans Frontières, Xavier Emmanuelli, is hardly exaggerating. At Antenne 2, Philippe Harrouard defends his channel with a staggeringly clear conscience.

"You can't talk about famine every day," pleads the Head of the Foreign Policy Department, with a confused conscience. "It's the Olympics now; we're not going to suppress the Olympics for Somalia! Information on the television is piecemeal, that's the rule of the game – you know that. There are a lot of problems in a lot of countries. One day, it's Uganda, another time, Somalia... Anyway, one of our reporters has just left for there. Call our Social Issues Department instead. They're the ones who cover natural disasters."
We get more information: learn that the journalist mentioned is effectively going on a reporting mission in Mogadishu. But after a false start with the departure, which speaks volumes about Antenne 2's level of enthusiasm, several months pass. MSF agrees to offer Antenne 2, as an exception, an air ticket, to break the silence of this tragedy. The journalist, embarrassed, quickly telephones the humanitarian organisation: she doesn't have a cameraman. That's no excuse. MSF will find one. Another phone call: Antenne 2 doesn't have a camera available anymore.
"For the past month or so, the media are beginning to take interest in this tragedy, which has no equivalent since the last famine in Ethiopia. Better late than never, but it's still been a year and a half since we've been appealing into the void for aid." Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry knows what he's talking about, he has been to Somalia seven times for MSF. The French Medicos were the only westerners to discover the horror that was starting, at the beginning of '91. In the incredible mayhem that followed the fall of the dictator Siad Barre, all the diplomats had fled. Marc and his team took enormous risks to care for their patients in the ruins of Mogadishu. Each time he returned to France he launched an SOS. "I held press conferences in foreign countries: in Italy, in the United States. Apart from some newspapers (like *Libération* in France) that always came, we unfailingly ran up against the media's silence. Somalia paid the price for the war in the Gulf, then in Kurdistan, and Yugoslavia."
Frédéric Laffont too has experienced this overarching indifference amongst the media. In January '91, this respected reporter came back from Mogadishu with terrifying images. He is one of the very first journalists to speak of the horror of this civil war, which already showed the signs of famine. "I saw so many horrors that I was traumatised by this assignment: looted hospitals, sick people abandoned to the flies. It was beyond comprehension. On my return, neither TF1, nor A2 or FR3 wanted my images." At the height of the Gulf War, the editors-in-chief didn't even pretend to look at the cassettes. Except Patrick de Carolis, who used a few minutes of it on *La Cinq* for his programme 'Reporters'.
How can one explain this monstrous bungle, this year of semi-apathy that cut Somalia from the rest of the world and delayed the sending of aid to the extent that it did? The International Red Cross had already launched a titanic operation. It feeds a million people per month. From the beginning of January, 64,000 tonnes of food has been delivered amidst looters and fighters.
"It's not a bungle, not an accident. That would be too simplistic. It's cynicism pinned up and claimed by the big media outlets," insists Frédéric Laffont. "The decision-makers of the TV channels stated categorically all this time that people weren't interested by Somalia. They were the Roman Empire that doesn't want to see what happens beyond its own borders. And now we have the result! We're there: at the tip of the nose of the tragedy that people pretend to be just discovering. And no one is saying that it was impossible or too expensive to go there. There are charter tickets for Nairobi for 3,500 francs [707 US dollars at the time] !"
And what if Africa didn't interest anyone and these images of the living dead with stomachs like balloons was leaving the French indifferent this time, powerless in front of so much misery? Médecins Sans Frontières wanted to know for sure. At the height of the Gulf War, it launched an appeal to its donors: 600,000 letters explaining the extremely

risky work of its teams in Somalia. Except for rare exceptions, all the donors were discovering this tragedy upon opening the letter. The donations flooded in like never before in the history of MSF! Eighteen million francs [3,6 millions US dollars at the time] were raised with this message in a bottle.
A record that restores a smile to Xavier Emmanuelli, "We have to stop taking people for idiots. Stop deciding on their behalf what they're interested by. How would you like to explain that the famine in Somalia is not fate, that Africa is remodelling itself under our eyes, in two minutes during the 8 pm news bulletin! This way of relaying world affairs, chopped up into little pieces like so many little made-up stories, makes no sense any more. Even the best reports (there were some very good ones on TF1) are drowned in this magma. Televised news needs to be put to death!"
Xavier Emmanuelli, founding father and spiritual director of MSF, will not subdue his anger. "To get the TV channels interested, you need to send Danielle Mitterand[9] or Bernard Kouchner,[10] or a charter of intellectual showbiz stars." In the case of Kouchner, it's already in the bag! The minister stepped foot in Somalia last week. Before him, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali launched himself into the fray, spurred on by humanitarian organisations for some months.
Let's bet there'll be television teams heading en masse – finally – to Mogadishu. Several weeks ago, CNN's Americans even deigned to show interest in this part of the world. Tomorrow the Somalis may be propelled onto page one of the news – climb into the top ten of the world's calamities. At the bottom of the ranking, meanwhile, the 40,000 Rohingya refugees who have fled Burma for Bangladesh still await their own media rocket ride. Waiting since 1978.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 18 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Horn of Africa Operation: The media have been jostling up against each other in the Horn of Africa for the past 15 days. Very good coverage: print, television, radio. Reporting underway by RFI, France Culture, Radio Suisse Romande, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Newsweek*, Magnum Photo Agency, CBS. Reports planned by Canal+, FR. Special projects planned by Antenne 2 (Special Envoy), *Ouest France*, *Sud Ouest*.
VIP Trip: France – few responses so far [...]
First-time meetings in September. USA: searching actively.
The fundraising appeal for MSF Somalia has appeared in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, French regional daily newspapers, and *Quotidien de Paris* [Paris Daily], with plenty more appearances expected in the coming days. Michel Clerc, Intersectional Communications Officer for all of the Horn of Africa, will be in place in Nairobi from Saturday August 21. Frederic Vigneau continues to look after the journalists in Mogadishu.

9. Wife of the President of the Republic of France at the time, François Mitterrand.

10. French Minister of Health and Humanitarian Action from April 1992 to 1993; Bernard Kouchner was one of MSF's co-founders in 1971, leaving in 1979.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 25 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia on their way – *Ouest France*, Canal+, Antenne 2, TF1, FR3, RFI, France Culture, *Phosphore*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, CBS, Channel I, *Detroit Free Press*, *Hebdo Portugais* [Portugese Daily] [departed or will depart for Somalia]. Departures to come: *Télérama*, Arte, *Sud-Ouest*. From 9 September, *La Marche du Siècle* will have Africa as its subject (generally).
Visit by a 'media personality:' Bernard Giraudeau [French actor] would be available from 19 September. RV?? to organise in the first half of September.

'Humanitarian Traffic Jam in Somalia', ***Libération*** (France), Stephen Smith, 26 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The world is rallying to come to the rescue of the Somalis. Yet on the ground, there is no coordination between the numerous NGOs and the various UN agencies, resulting sometimes in a humanitarian 'mess'. [...]
After 18 months of indifference, the international community has just proclaimed this unknown country in the Horn of Africa 'the greatest humanitarian tragedy'. At the height of its presidential campaign, the United States released 1,450 tonnes of food aid, equivalent to a half of the volume delivered over the course of the past eight months. Before the end of the week American planes should begin rotating from neighbouring Kenya into Baidoa, Somalia's 'waiting home of death', 250 kilometres west of Mogadishu. France has put in place its own airlift from Djibouti, to dispatch 200 tonnes of emergency aid. A new French boat is expected at the beginning of September.
On the ground, especially amongst the members of the different non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the malaise is obvious. [...]
Waiting for the hundreds of journalists and members of innumerable 'exploratory missions' to arrive stretches things to their limit. In a town with neither water nor electricity, without hotels or transport or fuel, managing them fatally cripples the humanitarian effort. On the flip side, the impact via the media compensates largely for this. "At least one person, most times a young child, dies each minute in Somalia," agency staff hammers home in their dispatches. For good measure, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Algerian Mohamed Sahnoun, opened the way for them by quoting the death toll at "5,000 children per day".
Murry Watson, an agronomist, has traversed Somalia for 20 years, and recalls that between 1978 and 1989, US$600 million and 50 experts on the ground were not enough to establish, with any certitude, a baseline census, let alone the nutritional status of the Somali population, some seven million mostly nomadic people. In the current emergency, the calculations are hastily made from a study done by Médecins Sans Frontières in five villages around Merca in March; the American Aid Coordinator in Washington, Andrew Natsios, has recently concluded with extrapolation that "at least 350,000 children have already died in Somalia."
How many Somalis have really died and, above all, how many risk dying of hunger in the weeks to come? MSF's Frédéric Vigneau considers an answer to the question "irresponsible". He notes that a good third of the country, the self-proclaimed Somaliland north of the 8th parallel, is not affected by famine. The result of a first-time tour of 15 or so localities around Baidoa is that MSF has just drawn attention to the dramatic localised

situations which explain the exodus towards the administrative centre of the province. "All the NGOs are now setting up in the villages and that's very good," explains Frédéric Vigneau, "But only if they really have the means and the competency." Some intensive feeding centres have opened without any general distribution of food, or medical aid, or provision of potable water.

This humanitarian mess can be explained thus: under pressure from their headquarters in Europe, NGOs hasten to plant their flags inside Somali territory. The act of staking a presence is worth gold, as long as the ancient Spice Coast preoccupies the notoriously fickle "universal conscience". Hardly two months ago, the European Community was refusing [food] aid and special nutrition programmes to save the most vulnerable victims as "too costly". Today, in localities that were inaccessible up until now, the International Red Cross and the World Food Programme (WFP) are organising a massive and broad food operation by plane. All the activism and the fallouts are not guarantees on their own that there will be a synergy of efforts with the aid well distributed. For the moment, there is no coordination between the numerous NGOs and the various UN agencies.

The UN still struggles to make up the time lost in its response to the Somali crisis. Having never been deployed to the demarcation line that cuts the capital in two, its 50 unarmed observers are manifesting their powerlessness physically; a third of them have fallen ill, suffering fever and diarrhoea. As for the 500 Blue Helmets whose dispatch was decided on 12 August, nobody can name the date of arrival. Meanwhile, a technical committee tasked with studying the security conditions necessary for unhindered distribution of the international aid has already concluded that at least 1,000 supplementary Blue Helmets will need to be sent in. "Whether the United Nations wishes to concede it or not, they quickly hit a snag," admits the Chief Commander of the UN forces in Somalia, the Pakistani General Imtiaz Shaheen. "The truth is quite simple, once our forces are deployed, we cannot leave the armed factions to their own devices. We will be obliged to protect the civilian population."

For now, however, this need to intervene is adapting very well to the sanitising de-politicisation of the Somali 'tragedy'. The world comes to the rescue of the victims of the drought rather than a tribal war. Equally, robberies and violence are the doings of 'armed looters' rather than rival factions.

Fax from Frédéric Vigneau, Assistant to MSF France Coordinator, to Anne Fouchard, Communications Officer, and Dominique Martin, Programme Manager, 28 August 1992 (in French).

Extract:

1) First up, here is the list of journalists that MSF has housed so far:

[...] MSF photographer; [...] *Liberation*; [...] TF1; Newsweek; (2 journalists); German press; *Detroit Free Press*; FR3 (2); 1 MSF Holland companion; [...] *The Guardian*. To these 13 we need to add 2 MSF Switzerland + 1 MSF Holland and 1 Terre des Hommes, also the ECC 'big boss' from Nairobi.

Departed yesterday: 1 *Nouvel Obs[ervateur]* [weekly French news magazine], 1 *Phosphore* [French young adult magazine], 1 A2, 2 CBS, 6 Canal+, 2 Ouest France, Radio Suisse Romande.

Still to come: *Ouest France* (2 people) + Michel Clerc, [...] *Journal de Montreal*, TV Good Morning America, Radio ?, Fox TV... To whom we should add Pharmacists Without Borders (5). They definitely won't be able to stay here.

I hope that this gives you a glimpse into the many people that transit through our home. At the same time, as you know, we are in opening phase and absolutely must coordinate our work. On top of this the American Air Lift is about to happen…
Now I come to your proposal for a comms attaché. We think, considering it from here, it would be preferable to hire a Somali. We have someone good here (ex-Somali TV journalist) who would be tasked with managing the journalists as well as the house that we're still looking for. It is not possible to free up a comms expat and have his/her role mostly occupied with orienting and accompanying the journalists. Currently there are too many of them anyway for one person to be able to accompany. Before, Mr Hutin [*Ouest France* CEO] and Canal+, as well as A2, were able to benefit from a unique 'regime'. (I'll come back to *Ouest France* later.) On the other hand, they all benefit from briefings, as much on Somalia in general as on MSF's programmes (hospital, drug supply, feeding). All of this means that it doesn't seem to us necessary to allocate an expat […]
For using the phone, for example, the fact of saying that it needs to be paid for and having them ask for permission preserves, in a way, the feeling that we are in our own home. And this is important, because when you reach the number of 16-18 journalists in the house, the comms/radio office as you may guess, very easily turns into a full-on phone exchange. Then, even if you want it or not, people become inconsiderate, and even if you understand it because they all face the demands of broadcasting, it's really annoying, especially from the point of view of [needing to be in] day-to-day contact with the programmes. Our office is the MSF communications room, not an international journalist switchboard.
So this is why I think that it's very important to have a contribution. We have always welcomed people and done our best when you've asked us to. I would also like to emphasise another aspect, to show you that I (we) are not negative and closed to things. It is surprising to see and to have such a diversity of journalists as we have (written press, TV, B-grade media, international…) and to see them all evolve in one common place: the MSF house, which is, what's more, for most of them a milieu that they don't know: the humanitarian world. Lots of positives have come out of these exchanges.

All the big, international reporters of all sorts of nationalities were arriving from Yugoslavia, where they had covered the ethnic cleansing camps. The opening of Baidoa was covered worldwide. There was an enormous amount of people. People often say that it was the Baidoa images that set in motion the American intervention. It was terrible. The famine was at a more advanced stage than what we'd found in Merka. Very quickly there was a substantial number of actors. I did direct-to-airs with CNN, Good Morning America, France 2, TF1, Libération*, I don't know how many articles we got. We had a real legitimacy because we had been there for a long time and because we had kick-started the operation. MSF was really hardcore. Even for the NGOs that were coming in, everybody came to get their briefing from us.*

Brigitte Doppler, MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, in December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; MSF France Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Somalia became the last place on earth. It was finally on the front page of all the newspapers. We quickly saw the perverse effects of this influx of journalists in the sudden rise in prices, security issues. This complicated the team's work enormously. We had

already had a bad experience in Liberia and said to ourselves it was probably not worth adding to our problems. So we sent in Fred Vigneau to look after the journalists.

Anne Fouchard, MSF France, Communications Officer, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Space in the media has opened up after the Olympic Games in Barcelona, it becomes hellish because Paris sends too many journalists, on top of which are added all those who come spontaneously to Mogadishu. We put them all up because we have a large house – which becomes a hostel! They start doing whatever they like. Patrick ends up pushing a television crew outside, which then follows him to film on the staircase. After that we calmed things down and only accepted trustworthy types.

Thierry Durand, MSF France, Regional Coordinator based in Nairobi, December 1990-September 1993, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

When we arrived there, we started giving out a lot of information to the media and everybody that wanted to listen. Bush came to Baidoa and Sophia Loren – the Americans sent a few famous people there. At least Baidoa was in the spotlight and the people were grateful that they got some kind of food.

Jules Pieters, MSF Holland, Emergency Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

Geoff Prescott, MSF Holland Coordinator in the north of Somalia, had an article published in the British weekly *The Sunday Times*. He described the constraints that the humanitarian teams must accept to be able to work in a context where they have to navigate between armed groups belonging to various political factions, against the backdrop of trafficking in qat.

'The Clans and How they Affect Relief Work', ***The Sunday Times*** (UK), Geoff Prescott, MSF Holland Head of Mission in Somalia, 30 August 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Nonchalantly, the wizened old Somali tossed a red grenade from hand to hand beside a desolate, sand-blown well as a relief team from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) wilted. It was a simple problem. His sub-clan, known to MSF by its radio code as the 'Yankees', had been fighting the 'Juliets'. There were a large number of sick and wounded and thousands of people were displaced, facing starvation.
MSF had set up a field hospital in the neighbouring neutral territory of the 'Indians', who were not involved in this particular local war. The field hospital had a road and an airstrip with good access for both the Yankees and the Juliets. But the old man and his fellow Yankee elders were not convinced of the Indians' neutrality; nor did they want their sick and wounded to be treated alongside the Juliets.
The eventual solution: four different hospitals and three relief centres had to be set up, instead of one. Even then, both Yankees and Juliets felt the other side was getting favourable treatment and shot at MSF vehicles with a tank and an anti-aircraft cannon,

thus proving the relief agency adage: 'Neutrality means being shot at by both sides.' This was a comparatively uncomplicated example of the nightmare we call the Somali Factor. Usually things get much worse.

Once, all Somalis traditionally owed allegiance to clans, whose elders settled the blood feuds that have always torn this land. But those ties have been so fragmented that the bands of Somali warriors who roam around armed with bazookas, tanks and heavy machineguns may now be loyal not to their clan, nor their sub-clan, but to some much finer division. This has created such a jigsaw puzzle of barriers that the delivery of humanitarian aid to the 1 million Somalis thought to be on the brink of death can appear impossible.

Even if the various clans and divisions of clans are persuaded to allow the safe passage of a relief column, the various militia units across its path also have to be sweetened. Militia troops, being unpaid and unfed, are undisciplined. Their pastime, besides making war, is looting relief supplies to sell to merchants so that they can buy the drug qat and send money to their families and friends.

Then there are the villages through which the aid must pass: every village in Somalia has at least one checkpoint and every family at least one high-velocity rifle. If an aid agency fails to gain the consent of any one person in this chain of clan elders, militia commanders or villagers, looting is almost inevitable. Small wonder then that of a nine-truck food convoy travelling 180 miles through the territory of two clans, five sub-clans, five army units and numerous villages in northern Somalia last January, a comparatively quiet area at a comparatively quiet time, not a single one got through, despite the approval of senior clan elders and militia commanders.

The situation is gradually improving as relief coordinators get to know the maze of sub-clans, militias and village defence forces. Even so, one MSF hospital and supply base was looted by the local mayor and elders. They said they had no choice: the enemy was near and might loot the hospital, so they had done it themselves first.

Colombia has its coca leaves, Thailand its opium, the West Indies its hashish and Somalia its qat - a small tree whose succulent leaves are the fuel of this war. Two 75-pence bundles get the average Somali man pleasantly 'qatted up' if chewed for a couple of hours and then pushed into the cheek for a re-chew later. A mild amphetamine, qat brings alertness and energy while suppressing hunger and libido. It works without a kick or dizziness, enabling it to be recreational.

The Somali elite used to settle its differences chewing qat, which facilitated conversation without disrupting rational thought. Common people chewed only irregularly, as a treat. But after the fall of President Siad Barre last year, looted wealth found its way into poor hands. Flush with money, soldiers and youths rapidly acquired a two-bundle-a-day habit. When the money ran out, they wanted to go on chewing: qat appears to be psychologically very addictive. So they joined militias in large numbers as Somalia drifted towards internecine strife, and they were able to support their qat habit by looting and killing. Light planes now fly qat from Kenya into airstrips in southern Somalia every day. In the north, the drug comes from Ethiopia in hurtling 'qat cars' driven by dealers desperate to sell the fresh leaves before the sun dries them into valueless scraps.

While the UN talks about demobilisation through food-for-guns programmes, some aid workers ponder 'qat-for-guns', though no doubt this would encourage Somali men to acquire even more weapons to surrender for even more of their favourite drug.

The efforts of MSF France's communications department to attract media personalities to Somalia came good during September 1992, even though the international media had already swamped Somalia. The French section upheld the decision to send Patrick Poivre d'Arvor, star presenter on French television's channel TF1. It is far from unanimous, particularly because MSF is paying for his plane ticket. In January 1993, some MSF donors would communicate their unhappiness with MSF's payment of a first-class ticket, information revealed in December 1992 by the satirical newspaper *Le Canard Enchaîné*.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 2 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Francois [Luiggi, Human Resources Manager] is surprised that Patrick Poivre d'Arvor [PPDA] had been called upon to visit Somalia (a point of view shared by several people in-house). For the majority of people present, PPDA remains a credible journalist who can contribute in a useful way to mobilising the general public in support of MSF's action in Somalia. Michel [Fiszbin, Director of Communications] reminds that we called upon all journalists without exception for them to do something for Somalia, and that PPDA is the one amongst them who did the most, well before this trip.
[...] Xavier Descarpentries [Director of the Fundraising Department]: excellent week of fundraising (9.7 million francs). One can assume that the level of private funds collected by the end of August will equal, even surpass that of 1991, a record year for MSF.
The trip to Somalia by François-Régis Hutin, President of *Ouest-France*, went very well. He returned strongly affected by the situation on the ground and very impressed with the work of MSF's people. A piece will appear today in *Ouest-France*, with an appeal for donations to MSF.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 8 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Comms plan for Somalia. Rony [Brauman] and Dominique Martin have left for Mogadishu with Nicole Du Roy (*Télérama*). PPDA leaves next weekend (departing Thursday, returning Sunday) for Moga with a crew from TF1.
In process: *Le Monde*, [French weekly magazine] *Télé 7 jours* + *JDD [Journal de Dimanche]*. «Special Envoy» 10 September on A2 at 8:40 pm: a Somali topic (announced via full-page promo in *Le Monde télé*). '24 Hours' 12 September on Canal+ at 12:30 pm (they followed MSF teams on the ground over 24 hours). *Ouest-France*: a series of articles, full-pagers, and appeal for funds.
On their way: l'*Est Republicain* and *Sud-Ouest*.
Radio France local radio stations: 20 of them broadcast our appeal for funds over a fortnight, with our post office account details.
Anne [Fouchard, Communications Officer] suggests making a new press release this week on the theme of the assistance that must continue, the decentralisation of aid on the ground, with new updates.
We're waiting for Rony and Dominique to return with their assessment of the journalist management system on the ground.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 1 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The PPDA affair: amongst the framework of diverse revelations about PPDA, *Le Canard Enchaîné* is readying to "reveal" that MSF "offered" him the first-class voyage to Somalia. If the decision for his trip to Somalia at the invitation of MSF was validated by the Management Committee on 2 September 1992, it was Michel (Fiszbin, Director of Communications) alone who took the decision to pay for his air ticket since neither he (PPDA) nor TFI was proposing to pay.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 4 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Relations with the media
Marcel Roux [Vice President of Board of Directors] raises the issue of the limits placed on MSF's investment regarding journalists with the aim of getting media attention to an issue. The financing of a 1st class return ticket between Paris and Mogadishu for Patrick Poivre d'Arvor so that the Somali crisis would be covered in the press poses ethical problems. A precise policy needs to be put in place on this issue. Rony Brauman points out that the rule is to never pay journalists, in whatever shape or form.
Bernard Pécoul [General Director] recalls the chronology of the facts: the Board of Directors in the month of June took the decision to send a media identity to Somalia, faced with the urgency of the situation, and not one of the actions undertaken since the beginning of the year designed to rally the media's attention had come to good. Thus 30 personalities were contacted without much success! The TF1 journalist [Patrick Poivre d'Arvor], having come forward in August, was chosen because of his strong presence in the media. MSF then found itself obliged to finance his trip, presented with his demand on the eve of his departure. An item on relations with the media will be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 13 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Xavier [Descarpentries, Director of Fundraising] reports on the unhappiness of certain donors with the fact that PPDA was sent to Somalia with a first-class ticket. A reply is being prepared to explain the situation.

It was because no-one was going there that we sent PPDA. It wasn't for fundraising, it was to make a noise, so that people would know what was happening. I believe that if we paid his ticket and in business class, it was because at that time of the year, the flights to Kenya were full. There were certainly shockwaves internally due to this affair.

Dr Brigitte Vasset, MSF France, Director of Operations, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

All the journalists in the world were in our house. We did press conferences morning and night. We had CNN who asked nothing more than to interview us. I don't think it was essential for PPDA to come.

Brigitte Doppler, MSF France, Mogadishu Surgical Programme Nurse, in December 1991; Member of epidemiological research team, March-April 1992; MSF France Medical Coordinator in Somalia, May-October 1992, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 1 September 1992, the British humanitarian organisation Save the Children declared that the UN's record in Somali was a failure.

'Somalia: According to the British Organisation Save the Children, the UN Record in Somali is "a Terrible Failure"', ***Le Monde*/AFP-Reuters** (re-reported), 1 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The different United Nations organisations that have planted themselves in Somalia are "poorly informed, poorly equipped, and poorly coordinated," and more often than not remain "at the level of pious voices without bothering themselves with how to put things in place" – this is the strong wording with which the General Manager of the British humanitarian organisation Save the Children, Mr Nicholas Hunton, cast judgement on the work of the UN organisations, Saturday 29 August, in London.
These organisations, torn up by "shameful rivalries", are, according to him, "preoccupied with their own interests above all else. The situation in Somalia is desperate. What we see now is the result of 18 months of a terrible failure by the UN and the international community," continued Mr Hunton, who asked the UN Secretary General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to visit and take stock of the situation on the ground and to task one of the UN organisations with the coordination of all the international aid. According to Mr Hunton, there is risk of a similar disaster reproducing soon in Mozambique.

On 9 September 1992, the Security Council of the United Nations accepted the request of the secretary general to increase the number of Blue Helmets deployed in Somalia to over 4,000 men. The first contingent of 500 had still not arrived in Mogadishu.

'The UN Increases its Force in Somalia to 4,219 Soldiers', **AFP** (France), New York, 9 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The Security Council approved a request by the UN Secretary General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, aiming to increase to 4,219, instead of 3,500, the soldiers of the United Nations in Somalia (UNISOM), according to official documents published Wednesday in New York. [...] The first members of a Pakistani contingent of 500 soldiers should arrive in Mogadishu on Saturday.

The same day, following their joint visit to Baidoa, Jacques de Milliano, General Director of MSF Holland, and Rony Brauman, President of the Board of Directors of MSF France, held a press conference in Nairobi. They had met the day before with Mohamed Sahnoun, the UN's representative in Somalia. Sahnoun informed them of the decision to reinforce UN troop numbers, which he had discovered while listening to the BBC.
In front of the press, the two MSF leaders once again stressed the urgency of a massive increase in the distribution of food aid and expressed doubt that the presence of UN troops would improve the security of humanitarian operations in Somalia. According to de Milliano and Brauman, this additional deployment of troops risked aggravating tensions and risks to humanitarian workers, thereby jeopardising relief structures.
In a press release distributed on 10 September 1992, MSF France expressed concern and, to help reduce tension, recommended an increase in the volume and reach of assistance.

'Doctors Predict Attacks on UN Troops in Somalia', **Reuters** (UK), Nairobi, 9 September 1992 (in English).

Extract:
The European medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) predicted on Wednesday that gunmen would attack U.N. troops when they arrive to protect famine relief operations in Somalia. "(They) will surely be shot at," Jacques de Milliano, President of MSF Belgium [error: he was General Director of MSF Holland], told reporters in Nairobi. "Their presence may result in greater insecurity," added de Milliano, returning from five days in Mogadishu and the towns of Bardera, Merka, Baidoa and Hoddur. "Tensions will only diminish after food loses its strategic value," he added. "The solution to diminishing tension lies in increasing food and streamlining the method of distribution."
The presence of U.N. troops could also disrupt a programme to feed up to 4.5 million starving Somalis, he said. The first 60 of a 500-man contingent of Pakistani troops are set to arrive in Somalia on Saturday to guard operations to bring relief to Somalia, where banditry is rampant. The rest arrive later this month. The U.N. Security Council has approved proposals to send another 3,000 troops. Rony Brauman, President of MSF France, told reporters food could be distributed adequately without soldiers "provided there is enough to deter unnecessary tensions and looting."
Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed opposes the extra 3,000 soldiers, saying they will violate Somali independence. His rival, self-proclaimed interim President Ali Mahdi Mohammed, has welcomed them and wants up to 10,000.

'Priority Must be Given to the Continuation and Decentralisation of Food Aid', **Press Release** No. 24, MSF France, 10 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The immense effort undertaken for several weeks by a certain number of states and international organisations brings hope to the Somali population threatened by death due to an extremely serious famine. However, Médecins Sans Frontières points out that delivery of food must remain the priority of the interventions. At a time when the aid apparatus is just beginning to consolidate, Médecins Sans Frontières fears that the

imminent arrival of a contingent of 4,200 Blue Helmets may inflame tensions instead of abating them.
In the absence of any real acceptance of the Blue Helmets by the warring parties, and in an extremely tense socio-political context, the arrival of the UN troops carries with it grave risks for the security of the humanitarian agents. Therefore, the foodstuffs need to be distributed more broadly in the significantly affected regions, so as to allow the population to stay in or return to their homes.
- Lack of food remains the major source of the tensions and the violence. By increasing the volume of food delivered, and reaching more regions with it, the tensions could drop. Such a broader deployment is possible in several of the regions severely affected by the famine.
- A high number of displaced people are leaving their home regions, where the needs are significant, for the towns, where they hope to receive what they need to ensure their own survival. In some sites, this leads to population concentrations in health conditions that are extremely precarious. In a climate of tension, this is more severe than the aid that is insufficient.
Médecins Sans Frontières and a number of humanitarian organisations like the ICRC are already attempting to expand the area reached by aid. Médecins Sans Frontières currently has 18 nutrition centres for children in the Merca-Brava region (Merca, Qoryooley, Bulot, Mater and Brava), and six in Kismayo. A new nutritional programme has been established in the regions of Baidoa, Wajit and Hudur (approximately 150 km north of Baidoa).

When the aid machine stabilises, the tensions are reduced, and consensus reached with the parties to the conflict, the UN contingent, while still facing a difficult mission, can be deployed and be useful for the effective rolling out of humanitarian operations.

'Relief Workers Reject More UN troops', ***The Guardian*** (UK), Mark Huband, Nairobi, 10 September 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Last night officials from the relief organisation Médecins Sans Frontières said the increased UN presence would jeopardise security arrangements the agencies have already developed with Somalia's warring factions. All relief agencies employ Somali guards to protect convoys and warehouses. If the UN took over this role, these guards would lose their jobs and status.
Rony Brauman, President of MSF France [Board of Directors], said last night that security was not the main priority of the agencies, as had been alleged. He said: "The top priority is food and its distribution, and we have the feeling that more violence might erupt from the presence of UN troops whose presence has not been accepted by the factions."
The Somali National Alliance led by General Mohamed Farah Aideed has already said it will not accept more UN troops. It was only after lengthy negotiations that it agreed to the 500 personnel who are about to arrive. [...]
Meanwhile, most of the relief agencies, including MSF and the International Committee of the Red Cross, believe that the key to the security problem is more food, not more troops. Food is the backbone of the Somali economy. Armed gangs control its arrival at ports and distribution within the country, and steal hundreds of tonnes. MSF believes that increasing availability of food, thereby decreasing its market value, would reduce tension by making it less profitable to steal and to risk being shot in the frequent gun-battles over food, which break out at the ports.

Rony [Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors] and I, we went to Somalia, to Baidoa, that was just before the military intervention. We met Mohamed Sahnoun, the Special Representative there and he told us that he was informed through the BBC that the military intervention would take place in Somalia. He was very angry because he was in a process of putting the parties together and suddenly they decided on the military intervention. Then, with Rony we went back to Nairobi and we organised a press conference. There are two press conferences for me, which were the toughest I had in my MSF life, and the first was that one with Rony. There is a misunderstanding in that respect in the MSF history because often people say that MSF called for a military intervention in Somalia. But we didn't, we said the opposite. With Rony we had this press conference and immediately everybody was so angry at us. I remember the BBC reporter, the guy from the Financial Times were so surprised. We had contacts with Paris, I remember that we had discussions. The headquarters were very angry at us that we did not ask for a military intervention. They said, 'we can't send this message.' It was nearly suicide to say that you were against the military intervention. We said, 'no, we have to say this because even Sahnoun was taken by surprise.' At the moment we had this press conference in Nairobi, MSF had not yet a clear position, so the first reaction was 'you can't do that.' We just put that ahead and then afterwards we came back with Rony in Paris and then the debate started. It was the same in Halabja [Kurdish people gassed by Saddam Hussein regime in 1989], the debate started after the position was stated.

Dr Jacques de Milliano, MSF Holland, General Director, 1985-1996, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

We meet Sahnoun in Mogadishu. We're lucky because he moves around a lot, which happens to be one of the criticisms unjustifiably levelled against him. What he tells us corresponds broadly with what we're seeing and what we're thinking. He is very convincing, not because his rhetoric is so to the point – it's true, and it's a little bit overtly drawn – but because he talks about things with us that resonate with us after our limited but very interesting tour in Somalia. He is not at all against the Blue Helmets going into Mogadishu, but he wants it to be negotiated with the two parties. Nonetheless, he knows what a Blue Helmet is, and thinks that without this prior negotiation, the Blue Helmets will have few concerns other than to protect themselves to ensure their own safety, and won't be able to do anything else. They won't have this symbolic role as guards, monitoring the ceasefire, and providing non-armed protection. We'd seen what UN protection could bring! It was the first mistake committed then that led to others – the mistake of New York declaring that the Blue Helmets were on their way, that the decision had been made, that they were soon going to disembark in Mogadishu, and promote the logic of assistance being imposed by the UN, which seemed dangerous to us, and in this way threw Sahnoun offsides. Jacques and I agreed on this. One of us was president of the International Board I think. In short, we thought we were fully entitled to make a declaration. We had decided to support Sahnoun over Boutros-Ghali.

The press conference was closely followed and very badly received. We were thinking we'd be the ones putting the UN on trial – not too unkindly but to a certain degree – but we found ourselves pretty well in the situation of the accused, facing our own tribunal by media. The general tone was very hostile. I have the impression that quite a few of the journalists thought that we just wanted to make a communications splash. They thought that because the evidence for the advent of the Blue Helmets and the need for them was out of the bounds of discussion. So Jacques' and my argument was really counter-intuitive, and maybe we explained ourselves badly. The journalists wanted to hear solutions, not the diplomatic-humanitarian complexities according to Sahnoun or MSF. We were surprised by the journalists' reactions,

surprised to see them express so much scepticism, coloured with a certain aggression, when we thought we were legitimate, and were so convinced of our case!

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

On 10 September 1992 – the same day as the press release – in a memo sent to his French and Dutch counterparts, Réginald Moreels, the Belgian section President, announced that MSF Belgium would pull away from the group position on the dispatch of Blue Helmets to Somalia. According to him, the plan to inundate Somalia with aid was no more than an illusion, but the protection ensured by the UN troops would allow the teams to deliver aid securely and to time.
A press release was drafted in which the Belgian section pronounced its support of the deployment of Blue Helmets in Somalia; however, in the end it was never released.

'The Positions of MSF France and MSF Holland Regarding the Dispatch of the Blue Helmets in Somalia', **Memo** from Réginald Moreels, President of MSF Belgium, 10 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
MSF Belgium is breaking away from this position for the following reasons:-

1. An increase in food aid in a range of places is necessary, but also necessary is the possibility of transport and distribution to the victims. All the teams on the ground have explained the difficulties they have met regarding looting and attacks on humanitarian convoys, as much on the Kenya-Somalia border as inside Somalia. Even the protection by armed militias is unstable and remains a vicious circle.
The dispatch of the Blue Helmets alone can ensure:
a) More effective protection of the convoys to the distribution points.
b) A halt to the vicious cycle that is paying the militia (my personal opinion, to be argued, is that the Blue Helmets should also and before all things disarm the militias, which won't be achieved without hitches, but remains the solution in the long term).
2. Currently, the teams put in a crazy amount of time expanding the distribution of aid, opening new nutrition centres, putting their energy into hospitals for security reasons, and into interminable discussions with the local authorities, whose power is fragile and unpredictable (for example the new project in Jilib starting up from Kismayo). Sending in the Blue Helmets could shorten the delays because, don't forget, this volley, this extreme insecurity, brings with it a decision-making process that changes day after day and costs the lives of hundreds of people per day!!
3. The flooding of Somalia with food is an illusion, in the sense that wherever there are 'warlords' there are the new 'rich', little potentates, with their own armed men(!), who 'take' a good portion of the food (either to sell it on the market or export it) and thus increase their power with money. More money means more weapons and the cycle closes in on itself with more violence. So, no improvement in the situation if the humanitarian aid is not at the same time protected (for example by the arrival of the Blue Helmets).

4. That the warlords (Aidid), the heads of the sub-clans (+/- 90), do not regard the arrival of the Blue Helmets favourably is normal in the sense that the latter will reduce their power to loot and divert the food aid. Moreover, there is the risk that they will slow down their war so as to acquire new territories.
What is unimaginable is that the recent declaration (by MSF France and MSF Holland) underlines that there must be a prior agreement with these bloody dictators before the dispatch of the Blue Helmets!! It's an abandonment of the necessarily subversive and private mandate of MSF in general. Of course there will be serious hitches, but an army, even the Blue Helmets, knows the risks of its work. Unlike us, humanitarians, the military are armed [...] Moreover, this issue consists of a negotiation between the Secretary General of the United Nations and the different Somali parties, which does not involve MSF.
These are observations that we can develop more as an argument in the coming days. As much as we are busy reflecting on a proposal for the role of the Blue Helmets, the eventual creation of humanitarian protecting forces, etc... It's a topic to mull over, debate, amend, and these sudden declarations are a sign not of flexibility but of immaturity!
As for the methodology employed vis-à-vis the Nairobi office, the teams, at least from MSF Belgium, our headquarters, the international office, it is not only pitiful but is evidence of a nationalist and egocentric attitude.
It mocks MSF members and managers who want international collaboration without the pitfall of sterilising our action and reflection. Because this last pitfall has become a one-size-fits-all argument for actions and declarations without consultation.

'Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium Declares itself in Favour of the Blue Helmet Deployment to Somalia', **Unreleased Press Release**, MSF Belgium, 10 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The Blue Helmet deployment in Somalia is, for now, the sole hope for free access to the civilian Somali population, threatened with death due to an extremely serious famine. For some months, Médecins Sans Frontières' teams, and those of other organisations, have seen their presence and their work perpetually threatened by numerous constraints imposed by the millions of armed men and children who call the shots in Somalia.
Suffering robberies, racketeering and misappropriations, the aid organisations must pay a high price to co-opt private militias, the only ones currently capable of ensuring a minimum of security for them. These multiple obstacles to the deployment of assistance end in hundreds of additional victims each day. Faced with this exceptional situation, MSF Belgium can only support the initiatives taken by the United Nations to break this vicious cycle.
However, it is important to be wary of all haste. In effect, without a minimal agreement between the parties on the ground, there is a big risk of seeing aggressive tendencies emerge locally that could translate into broad rejection of all forms of western intervention, and thus work against all their aims.

'MSF France in Somalia – January 1991-May 1993 – Mission Evaluation – Final **Report**', Virginie Raisson and Dr Serge Manoncourt, 4 February 1994 (in English from French original, translation by Richard Swanson and Eric Bullington).

Extract:
In August '92, MSF [France]'s president, back from Mogadishu and confident of his analysis, called a press conference in Nairobi at his own initiative [alongside the general director of MSF Holland] to come out against the arrival of the blue helmets – without first informing either communications in Paris – which felt doubly bypassed because MSF Belgium had taken the opposite position [...] – or the team in Mogadishu, which dreaded the reaction of Ali Mahdi, who had pronounced himself in favour of the intervention.

When I read this memo, I can see Réginald mounting his proud steed and saying, 'We need a military intervention.' Then, he complains because he hasn't been consulted and therefore takes a different position. But the report was not released to the public, they let it slide. MSF France has always been viewed with much suspicion by MSF Belgium. They were perceived as being ready to sacrifice the [Somali] people for dogmatic reasons because things were done which they didn't like, because the Americans were there or not, because of the Russians, the communists, etc. Of course, this is a perception that does not correspond with the reality.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

I myself, I must admit, was in favour of military intervention. I believed that it was not possible to stop the famine without political measures and that this implied, amongst other things, military intervention. We had a huge discussion about this with Brauman and Gastellu. MSF Belgium was saying that it wasn't only massive humanitarian aid that was necessary, but also military intervention, while MSF France was clearly stating that this was not the case. Their position was clear and unshakeable, while for MSF Belgium, it was less obvious. The Board didn't really take a position. On the executive side, the director of operations at the time was not really fixed, he swayed sometimes a little to the left, sometimes a little to the right. When we answered journalists' questions, naturally the most difficult element was presenting oneself in agreement with the position taken by MSF France to preserve a coherent image internationally. However, this was screwed up several times, especially, for example, when Brauman was in Mogadishu and me, I was in Kismayo or Nairobi. For example, one of us said the opposite of what the other said. But the press didn't really bother us about it too much. I had the impression that we could have got ourselves out of it by saying: in Mogadishu it's different to Kismayo. But that was by no means the real reason for our disagreement.

Dr [...], MSF Belgium, Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

This created tension with MSF Belgium, because we hadn't briefed them, or at least not well enough. It must be pointed out that in the field, with the exception of satellite [telephone] suitcases, there were not a great many means of communication... Confronted with our position, there was a double-edged reaction from the Belgians to Jacques and to me. They were furious that they hadn't been consulted or collaborated with. But they

were even more furious because they were in favour of the Blue Helmets because they felt themselves in obvious proximity to the United Nations. The United Nations and NGOs have obvious affinities. They constitute two levels of aid which are not governmental, but which are the most legitimate and ultimately the most altruistic, therefore the most concerned about their action achieving good results. This close affinity makes it difficult for them to address any criticism of each other. In MSF France, we didn't have this devotion to the United Nations that is generally shared by NGOs.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

The Belgians were not against the United Nations' military intervention, while Rony was. This time, I myself was more with the Belgian position. We believed that the NGOs were blockaded, that the armed guards were not a solution, that in the end we were in the process of feeding the war economy in an excessive fashion, and as such we were sustaining the war more than we were helping the people. MSF France agreed with that too, but found that it was necessary nonetheless to continue on as they were. It mustn't be forgotten that at the time in Somalia, humanitarian NGOs were all there was. The support of the war effort by NGOs was extremely significant. The amounts that MSF France and the Red Cross were spending there were considerable. All the factions had their escorts paid largely by the humanitarian organisations. I believe Rony and MSF France said they were against the intervention.

Dr Alain Destexhe, MSF International, General Secretary 1991-1995, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

In my memory, it's still there, we asked for military intervention – or at least, we didn't say no. At least, informally, in contacts with the politicians, I'm quite sure that we asked for some kind of intervention but we didn't say that publicly.

Jules Pieters, MSF Holland, Emergency Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

On 11 September 1992, on his return from visiting the MSF Belgium programmes in Kenya and Somalia, the former Belgian Prime Minister (1981-1991), Wilfried Martens, called for the deployment of United Nations forces in order to protect the distribution of humanitarian aid.
For its part, UNICEF sent an 'ambassador' in the form of actress Audrey Hepburn to the Somali refugee camps in Kenya, who, on return from a visit, declared that Somalia could still be saved.

Fax from Robert Muller, MSF liaison with the United Nations, to the presidents of the different MSF Sections and to the secretary general of the MSF International movement, 11 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Mr W. Martens, Prime Minister of Belgium from 1981 to 1991 and President of the Federation of 'Christian Democrat' parties, visited the refugee camps in Kenya and Somalia under the auspices of MSF Brussels. Very moved by the misery he saw first-hand during this visit and by the difficulties the MSF teams have to confront in this region, he requested on his return an audience with Mrs Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In the course of this meeting held on Tuesday 8 September, Mr Martens underlined the importance of the High Commission intensifying its assistance programmes in the camps, and especially for the Mandera camp, where the situation is particularly difficult. He asked Mrs Ogata to do everything possible within her power to obtain security reinforcements from the Kenyan authorities within the camps and on the access routes to the camps. Mr Bwakira, Regional Director for Africa, who was present at this meeting, underlined that in spite of orders given by the Nairobi government, the police and the Kenyan army, who had been attacked several times by groups of refugees and bandits, were reluctant to ensure protection of these camps. UNHCR attached great importance to this issue and was convening regularly with the Kenyan authorities.

With respect to Somalia, Mr Martens promised to undertake all possible interventions to succeed in having the United Nations forces in place. Their first task would be to protect the transport and distribution of food. The Belgian government is planning to send a contingent of 500 soldiers. He also promised to ask the 'Christian Democrat' parliamentarians, whom he was to meet the next day in London, to convince their government to support the United Nations in its efforts to find a solution to the Somali crisis.

During our visit, we were also able to give Mrs Ogata an account of all the activities by all MSF sections in the Horn of Africa. It was repeatedly mentioned that the collaboration of MSF (and other NGOs) was particularly appreciated by UNHCR and the whole international community. Mrs Ogata asked me to keep her informed about the problems that MSF could come across in implementing its aid projects. This visit, which lasted close to an hour, was very positive and particularly enabled Mrs Ogata to realise the significance of the aid programmes implemented by the MSF movement.

'"Somalia May Still be Saved" According to Audrey Hepburn', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 24 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:

After returning from a visit to Somalia and the northeast of Kenya, American cinema actress Audrey Hepburn declared Thursday in Nairobi that the international community could still prevent millions of Somalis from dying of hunger, even if humanitarian aid had arrived too late.

"For many people help has come too late, but for many, many others, we can still get there in time," Mrs Hepburn, voluntary ambassador for UNICEF, declared during a press conference. The actress explained that she had returned from visiting the port town of Kismayo (in the south of Somalia), Mogadishu, and Baidoa (in the centre).

In Baidoa she "entered the nightmare world" that had already disturbed her dreams for several months, and had been present at the loading of 100 corpses onto a truck. "No

report, as excellent as it may have been, could have prepared me for the unspeakable anguish I felt on seeing those countless small and fragile skeletons, sitting, and waiting to be fed," she recounted, in tears. She also described the refugee camps in the northeast of Kenya, where hundreds of thousands of Somalis live "in hell", representing "the horror of the Somali holocaust". She added that the camps are in urgent need of tents and clothing, due to the start of the rainy season.

Martens was a heavyweight of Belgian politics, he had been Prime Minister many times and was the political man of the decade. For MSF, to be associated with such a political heavyweight meant ensuring itself an entry point to the media. During this era, it was also MSF Belgium's wish to use a more 'take it to the people' approach, and by sending Martens, we were guaranteed to attract all the journalists around him.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

An initial contingent of Blue Helmets arrived in Mogadishu on 14 September 1992, while the World Food Programme teams started to airdrop food to the isolated regions of Somalia. **V8**

'Arrival of the First 40 Blue Helmets in Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 14 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The first 40 Blue Helmets sent to Somalia to protect the humanitarian convoys arrived in Mogadishu on Monday on board two American army cargo planes. [...]
At the same time, a ship belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has begun to be unloaded in the city's port, which was reopened after two weeks of closure due to fighting. [...]
Five hundred UN men were expected to take up position in Mogadishu between now and the end of the month. Special representative of the United Nations in Somalia, Mr Mohamed Sahnoun, who greeted the Blue Helmets on arrival, declared that negotiations were underway with General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, one of the most powerful warlords, for the arrival of thousands of other soldiers. After first having been opposed to any kind of UN military presence, General Aidid accepted the arrival of 500 men, but he still refuses the dispatch of a more sizeable international force, while the UN has decided to send more than 4,000 Blue Helmets to Somalia.
The transitional Somali President, Mr Ali Mahdi Muhammad, one of the most fierce adversaries of General Aidid, extended a welcome to the soldiers of the international organisation. A number of Somalis do not hide their scepticism of the deployment of these soldiers, who arrived in five vehicles (two small trucks, a jeep, a tractor, and a forklift), painted in white and emblazoned with the initials of the UN.

'Food Airdrop Operations in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 15 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The World Food Programme (WFP) has started to drop food into remote regions of Somalia inaccessible by other means, the organisation announced Tuesday in a press release in Nairobi. Fourteen tonnes of wheat were released by a Hercules jet above the town of Tigieglo, 72 km to the east of Hudur, in the west of Somalia. The WFP, a body dependant on the United Nations, hopes that these operations will slow the exodus of thousands of people leaving their homes in inaccessible rural areas to go to towns such as Bardhere and Baidoa, where food aid started to arrive in August.
Last week, WFP experts visited these remote regions to identify the towns where food aid is necessary and where the planes can land or drop food. Members of the WFP and village elders are helping to distribute the food sent by the WFP to people who are victims of the famine in Tigieglo and in the neighbouring villages. According to the WFP, one plane of food is enough to feed around 1,000 people for a month. Towns of more than 1,000 inhabitants will receive aid twice a week, approximately every ten days.

On 15 September 1992, Rony Brauman, President of the Board of Directors of MSF France, told the French daily newspaper *La Croix* that it was necessary to delay sending the Blue Helmets to Somalia to avoid stirring up tension.
On 3 October, in an op-ed in another French daily, *Le Monde*, he asserted that the cost to deliver aid without the Blue Helmets in this context is approximately 20% of the total value, while international protection would cost between five and ten times more. He underlined once again that the arrival of additional Blue Helmets risks increasing the level of violence, and recommended that the UN help set up a local police force instead of substituting for it.

'The President of MSF Recommends Postponement of the UN Blue Helmets in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Paris, 15 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Mr Rony Brauman, President of Médecins Sans Frontières, asserts that the dispatch of the UN Blue Helmets to Somalia should be "delayed" so as to not inflame tensions in the country. In an interview with the daily newspaper *La Croix*, dated 16 September, Mr Brauman underlines that the dispatch of more than 4,000 UN soldiers "is not the solution needed" because it risks "inflaming the tensions instead of subduing them, and provoking a serious counter fallout."
From his assessment that the Somali factions "have not given their agreement to this arrival" and that they have only agreed to the 500 Blue Helmets responsible for ensuring respect of the ceasefire in Mogadishu, Mr Brauman outlines that the dispatch of additional troops will be "a burden and a danger at the same time for the humanitarian presence" and for "the security of NGO workers".
Mr Brauman – who has just returned from Somalia and is getting ready to visit New York to lobby against the immediate dispatch of the Blue Helmets – further explained that the arrival of "soldiers + foreigners + arms lends the food strategic significance, which must be divested of at all costs". According to Mr Brauman, of the ten distribution points in the country, "only five currently see aid arrive". On the other hand, the MSF president

believes it necessary, "even before the UN soldiers arrive", to send in "aid in large quantity and into different locations", without stockpiling, so as to avoid looting.

'Debates - Africa: Aid is Possible', Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, ***Le Monde*** (France), 3 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Somalia today is no longer a forgotten tragedy. Eighteen months after the start of the civil war, eight months after the emergence of signs heralding the famine that was to follow, the wall of silence and of oblivion that we, along with the ICRC, tried to put a dent in for months, has now crumbled. The rallying of international aid, though still insufficient, has grown over recent weeks and is now very real and visible on the ground. And yet it's possible to have the feeling that nothing has really changed: the mortality rate remains appalling (230 deaths per day on average in the town of Baidoa for some weeks), the violence does not seem to have relented, and the images that journalists bring us remain despairingly identical. Does this mean that the looting and the racketeering reduce our effort to nothing? That without international protection provided by the 'Blue Helmets', the aid will only serve to fatten a handful of "warlords" and will not reach its planned recipients except in tiny quantities?

We don't believe so. In reality, the aid is beginning to produce real effects, though still hardly visible for reasons it is important to understand. On the one hand, the benefits of the arrival of food and the establishment of nutrition centres cannot be immediate, taking into account the grave state of the population: the most seriously malnourished – those who have lost more than a third of their weight – die in great numbers despite being able to feed again, and the others take between four and eight weeks in specialised centres to regain a "normal" appearance. On the other hand, the arrival of assistance leads systematically to significant concentrations of affected people. Those whose state has improved – and there are many of them – are then replaced forever by a new group who find themselves in the same psychological distress as their predecessors at the beginning, creating the sense of an eternal reset to the beginning. Finally, in the inevitable chaos of getting assistance underway, the epidemics – measles and typhoid in particular – can develop silently during the several weeks necessary for establishing effective medical and sanitary measures (medical care, vaccination, potable water supply, waste disposal) [...]

Moreover, when the situation is 'visibly' transformed, it moves away – by definition – from the gaze of the camera, which will always focus on the emaciated child, ignoring the kid with plumped up cheeks saved from death some weeks earlier. The Merka region in June, for example, presented the same desolate spectacle as Baidoa. But now transformed, and evidence of the effectiveness of aid, it is generally ignored, as no doubt Baidoa will be in several weeks hence.

Aid is possible, then, in spite of the violence and the anarchy, at the price of real risks and material losses that can be estimated at 20% of the food, stolen by clans or armed gangs. International protection will cost five or six times more than this 20% without being able to guarantee complete effectiveness as a shield. This is why the priorities, in terms of humanitarian action, are: 1) increasing the overall quantity of food to reach monthly shipments of 70,000 tonnes; 2) doubling of the arrival points for aircraft in the country; 3) using the local networks and their means to ensure improved distribution of the food in the remote areas of the country.

These latter two points would have the immediate effect of easing the over-concentrations of the population, the reason for all sorts of dangers, and of revitalising to some extent

a depleted society, which would all contribute to reducing the strategic value of the food, and thus its price and the violence linked to that. Can the UN, which has a fundamental role to seek and negotiate a political solution to this conflict, improve the security for humanitarian aid in Somalia? Without a doubt, once an agreement is in place with the forces involved to make that task possible.
If this is not the case, the 'Blue Helmets' will risk, against their will, fanning new violence instead of subduing it. How can one imagine, in a context of such extreme tension and societal breakdown, that a police operation is possible without knowing the language, the terrain, the actors, the splits? The UN can and must assist with the formation of a local police force, but not substitute for it. Today in Somalia the challenge is to save all those possible with increased food and medical aid, and to contribute to the building of a political life that was annihilated by the long-standing dictator, Siad Barre. In this area, there are unfortunately no key solutions at hand; instead a programme of action by the humanitarian organisations and the UN that will continue to develop, on condition that the international community maintains its support.

On 17 September 1992, MSF France publicly announced the opening of nutrition centres in Hudur. It pointed out that it would have to undertake a selection process among the children, even though all of them are affected by malnutrition.
In Kansardhere, MSF Switzerland took charge of an MSF France project, and announced this in a press release on 5 October.

'Médecins Sans Frontières to the Rescue of Children in Hudur', **AFP** (France), Khaled Haidar, Hudur, 17 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
To deal with the most urgent cases and save human lives, the Médecins Sans Frontières' French team (MSF France) set up in Hudur in the west of Somalia, and had to select from amongst the children suffering from hunger. And yet, all of them are skeletal.
Two thousand children, first victims of the famine in Somalia, are organised in each of the three food distribution sites. In Hudur, 25 to 30 people are buried per day, much less than elsewhere, explain the experts, but the influx of new arrivals heralds the next update of this macabre statistic.
[The children are] attracted by the 200 daily arrivals of Hercules C-130 flights that carry the food aid, asserts Abdi Mohamed, a Somali doctor who works with MSF. [...] To try to put a brake on the gruelling exodus of the nomads towards the towns where the food centres are, humanitarian organisations wish to work 'upstream' and to deliver sacks of rice and corn regularly to the remote places that are not too threatened by looters.
More than 156 MSF international staff are already in Somalia, in Kenya (camps housing Somali refugees and Kenyan nomads), in Ethiopia (camps housing Somali refugees and groups of affected Ethiopians), and in Yemen (assistance for Somali boat people).
Médecins Sans Frontières is still looking for logisticians and nurses with field experience to ensure rotation of the teams on the ground.

'Médecins sans Frontières Intervenes in Somalia to Assist 30,000 People', **Press Release**, MSF Switzerland, 5 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Médecins sans Frontières Switzerland is starting its nutrition and medical programme established in Kansardhere, west of Baidoa, to assist a population of 30,000 people, mostly displaced people alongside some residents. A nurse, a logistician, and a sanitation technician, assisted by 120 local employees, will open up to 6 supplementary nutrition centres able to receive a maximum of 1,000 children each. A programme of medical care, provision of potable water, hygiene, and sanitation will also begin in parallel.
This Médecins sans Frontières Switzerland mission, financed to a large extent by La Chaine du Bonheur, is an extension of the existing Médecins sans Frontières interventions in Somalia, which consist of surgical activities in Mogadishu and nutritional aid programmes in Kismayo, Baidoa, Hudur, Wajid, Merca, Brava. More than 156 MSF aid workers are already in Somalia, in Kenya (camps housing Somali refugees and Kenyan nomads), in Ethiopia (camps housing Somali refugees and groups of affected Ethiopians), and in Yemen (assistance for Somali boat people).
Médecins Sans Frontières is still looking for logisticians and nurses with field experience to ensure rotation of the teams on the ground.

At the end of September 1992, the MSF France coordinator questioned the opening of a mission in Bardhere as planned by the programme manager for the Belgian section. According to him, in the wake of an evaluation by MSF France in Bardhere in mid-August, it was understood that it was not appropriate to open there for political reasons. In the end, the Belgian section only opened its programme in January 1993, due to difficulties finding international team members to work in such a dangerous area. The programme was closed several months later, for similar reasons.

Letter from Patrick Vial, MSF France Coordinator in Somalia, to Dominique Martin, MSF France Programme Manager for Somalia, 29 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Hello, [...]
I'm putting pen to paper tonight to share with you a serious dispute that has been ongoing for some time now with our dear friend [...] and the MSF Belgium coordination team in Somalia. The dispute relates to the possible presence of an MSF section in the town of Bardhere, in the Gedo region. Bardhere was chosen by General Aidid and his three compadres of the SSNM [South Somalia National Movement], SPM, and SDM [Somali Democratic Movement], as the capital, the symbolic town of the new SNA [Somali National Alliance], the political organ of the reunification of the political parties and clans allied with Aidid, and the USC.
I did a survey there mid-August with Fred. We identified a serious problem in terms of the displaced populations (1,000-3,000 at the time). A report followed, recommending a rapid intervention, based on general food distribution, supplementary feeding, and medical treatment. Today, CARE and WFP ensure the food; SCF, UNICEF and soon ACF [Action Against Hunger] and GOAL the supplementary feeding; and lastly, UNICEF

supports the hospital. MSF abstained from having any sort of presence in Bardhere, despite the political repercussions that would flow out of it as a matter of course. On the other hand we're intervening in the Kansardhere-Dinsoor region 50 km away.
We are accused of being 'pro-Aidid' by Ali Mahdi's followers and Ali himself. Our relations have recently gotten worse again following our declarations on the subject of the arrival of the additional Blue Helmets, our defamatory press campaign, accusations of all sorts, our 'with us or against us' attitude. We are seriously considering opening a new programme in the regions controlled by Ali Mahdi, which would considerably cool down the hot tempers. MSF Spain coming in is something that could be offered. Given the splits in the sub-clans and the absence of controls on the population by the authorities, I'm taking these things very seriously.
The dispute arises from the fact that [the MSF Belgium programme manager] takes absolutely no account of these facts, wanting to open in Bardhere at any cost. I had already clearly expressed my reluctance regarding such an eventuality. This was, in my capacity as 'general coordinator' for MSF in Somalia, my single grievance. It seems to me now, after numerous attempts at dialogue, that [he] cares little for all forms of recommendation from me and, on top of this, acts in provocation, by sending a team last week to Bardhere to make contact with the Mogadishu NGOs with whom I communicate regularly, and to commit to undertaking an intervention if they do not. All this without informing anyone here of what's going on [...]
I thus regret to inform you that the idea of general coordination, which in fact consists of a limited role representing MSF in Mogadishu and making recommendations on geopolitical or clan issues, exists only on paper. However, this is of little importance in light of the serious consequences that risk ensuing from Sir [...]'s disdain for his little colleague's advice. The security of our teams is at stake. On the other hand, I consider it absolutely wrong for MSF Belgium to come and explore, or set up, in a place that MSF France has already investigated and where it was decided not to intervene for known reasons. So I ask Sir [...] to revise his plans. There is a lot to be done in the regions of Kismayo, Jamame, Jilib [...] without going further. Otherwise, and I would be shocked by such irresponsibility from a 'programme manager,' I will find myself obliged to exercise a veto, something I feel absolutely entitled to do.

Patrick [Vial, MSF France Coordinator in Somalia] had become a little 'proprietorial' with regard to Somalia. And in the eyes of the other sections and a certain number of us here, it was clearly unacceptable. Things could not work like that. It was a general reality. That doesn't deny that he knew the country well, and that perhaps he was right about the issue of Bardhere. But I would not credit him that. If I had a bias, it was more to the side of the Belgians. The programme manager of MSF Belgium wasn't my cup of tea but he was meeting unacceptable resistance. Patrick was too involved, too caught up in being in tune with all the Somali vibrations.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

I did a cross-border explo mission going through Mandera (Kenya) to get to Bardhere. Aidid was being blockaded by I no longer know which faction, as was the population of this little town and the displaced persons' camps. It had become a sort of enclave. No aid could get in. Along with the medical coordinator for Somalia, based in Nairobi, we said we were going to try an explo mission anyway, to try to force open the blockade. People were

dying everywhere in this town; we saw people eating roots. It was really disastrous. Yet Brussels rejected an intervention because they couldn't find international staff to go there; there was an overall lack of international staff for Somalia. It's true that on a security level it wasn't nice. In January 1993, we opened Bardhere nonetheless, with international team members coming from the Jilib project, which had been opened in November 1992. But it was 100% the wild west. In the end, I had to withdraw the team from Bardhere. They couldn't hold on any longer. For months it had been impossible to find international staff, so we didn't have the means to launch operations. And so we closed the project.

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

On 23 September 1992, MSF France launched a new fundraising appeal for its aid operations in Somalia, emphasising the fact that the Somalis still needed assistance.

'Médecins Sans Frontières – Emergency: Operation Horn of Africa', **Press Briefing**, MSF France, 23 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières, present in Somalia since January 1991 and in the Kenyan camps since February 1992, has for several months been mounting aid programmes everywhere it is possible to do so, deploying all our human and material resources. 156 Médecins Sans Frontières international staff are on the ground in Somalia, in Kenya, in Ethiopia, and Yemen for one of the most significant emergency operations our organisation has ever been involved in. Médecins Sans Frontières' Horn of Africa budget has reached beyond US$25 million.
The Somali emergency, to save millions of individuals from death, is ongoing. We need to be able to treat several hundreds of thousands of victims and to save tens of thousands of children from hunger. That is why we still need the support of the media and the public, so that everyone knows that the Somalis continue to need assistance. We need help to show that it is possible to act effectively by increasing awareness of our work and that our aid operation will be supported financially.
Thank you for your support. [...]
The cost of nutrition centres
[...] The budget for a nutrition centre to treat 500 children for a month is 99,200 francs. By making a donation of 200 F to Médecins Sans Frontières, you will enable us to feed a child for one month.

The French Health Minister, Bernard Kouchner, announced 'A day for Somalia', when school students were asked to bring rice for the Somalis. The MSF teams in the field were concerned about the new influx of journalists that the campaign may generate. The 'day' took place on 20 October, and MSF seized the opportunity to inform possible future donors about its activities in Somalia. All the same, the 'sack of rice' campaign was far from unanimously supported politically or by the French associations. V9 V10 V11

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 29 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Comms plan: Horn of Africa
The press kit has been updated once more with the latest information and maps. A broad mailing list will be collated next week to rekindle interest amongst journalists. The kit will be accompanied by a letter addressed to the editors-in-chief and copy of artwork (if possible, new artwork).
National day for Somalia on 20 October [is] instigated by Kouchner to benefit from the rallying of public opinion. We are preparing documents, noting the specific actions of MSF in Somalia, our needs, and MSF's bank account, not to be confused with the minister's account. A kit has been sent to the antennas [MSF satellite offices run by the association] as of this week as a reminder for the [regional daily press]. Contacts at the school level to be researched to know who is best (educational consultants or others – Carl is doing the research). Two France 2 crew are leaving, one for Ethiopia and Somalia, the other for South Sudan, under the framework of the 20 October day & live coverage from schools in France. The 'SOS Somalia' (campaign Kouchner) poster campaign has started.

'**Fax** from Frederic Vigneau, MSF France Communication Officer in Somalia, to Dominique Martin, Somalia Programme Manager, and Anne Fouchard, Communications Officer', MSF France, 27 September 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Regarding the arrival of some 20 people from A2 [television] for the 1 kg of rice per child campaign:
1) [The A2 journalist] must without doubt contact us again before leaving for Mogadishu because I would like to clarify certain points on Somalia. It is clear that the [visit] is not directly for MSF, but that if there is a message that we wish to have broadcast, we can do that. In the same line of thinking, it is clear that it's not MSF that has to take responsibility for these people (worth noting that the cost of accommodation has risen, or will rise, to US$50/day from 1 October). There is no doubt that there will be other journalists alongside A2…
It is difficult for us here to imagine a fresh influx of the type of people that we were submitted to in August and the beginning of September. We propose and would like Anne Fouchard to free herself to come to Mogadishu. It is important to facilitate exchange, and for Comms in Paris to make itself aware of what that represents. […] It would also seem interesting for Anne, having been involved since the beginning with Somalia and being our main interlocutor, to be present for an exercise of this scale.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 13 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Horn of Africa
Reminder artwork: call for a volunteer to dedicate themselves to follow-up for the whole week, to obtain free mentions in the press.[…]

Operation Kouchner for Somalia: generated not a bad amount of calls to us. Michel [Fiszbin] will see at the Wednesday meeting how we can take advantage of this. FYI: MSF is not a stakeholder in the operation, but we are sharing the information with the people who call on us to act. If they want to participate in the 'rice' campaign we give them the toll-free number.
Europe 2: this station's network has been contacted to air our 'Somalia' message.

'The Children of France Support Somalia: a Nationwide Humanitarian Operation', **AFP** (France), Paris, 20 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
12.5 million little French individuals, in their 73,000 schools, colleges and institutes, were convinced on this 'Third World Day' at school to bring rice, destined for the children of Somalia decimated by famine. Out of a total population of 6 million, 1.5 million Somalis, children in the majority, are in danger of immediate death, and 3 million are threatened more or less in the short-term.
"You will be bringing a simple packet of rice like a helping hand to those whose hands are empty. For a little Somali who will receive your gift, each grain of rice will be a grain of life," announced the national minister for education. "Your chain of solidarity will be able to feed Somali children for a month," affirmed the minister for health and humanitarian action. Their calls were heard, and on Tuesday the schoolrooms started to look like warehouses [...]
There were some voices of disagreement as to the soundness of the initiative, of its "limited and uncertain reach", according to the PCF [French Communist Party]. "There would be better value in sending French wheat," said Robert Pandraud of the RPR [Rally for the Republic, conservative political party], while Force Ouvrière [French labour union for public school teachers] teachers stated that "secular schools have never been involved in a charity exercise like this." The Centre for Research and Information for Development (CRID), which gathers together some 30 humanitarian associations, spoke of the "illusion" and expressed doubts that the rice would actually reach the Somali children.

Bernard Kouchner responded to them publicly saying, "There are always vultures and killjoys. This operation won't right the war, but those who are always criticising everything, tell me what we can do when the children die. If [instead] we can feed the children for a month, it's a good thing," he argued.

D. INSUFFICIENT BUT MUCH COVETED AID

MSF teams were very active in the regions of Somalia most severely affected by the famine, but their work was regularly hampered by fighting and security incidents. On 18 September 1992, five MSF France staff and two journalists were briefly taken hostage at Medina hospital in Mogadishu by an employee dissatisfied with having part of his wages paid in food. At the end of October, the hospital staff went on strike and denied MSF's international staff access to the facility. At the beginning of November, after being ordered to take charge of refurbishing the hospital and the staff payroll or get out, MSF decided to close down its activities in the hospital.

On 1 October, fighting between different Somali factions temporarily prevented the MSF France team from going into Merka. On 14 October, some of the MSF Holland team left the mission in Baidoa after rumours of a possible attack on the town. While they were gone, the guards machine-gunned their way into the radio room and looted it. On 7 November, some of the team were again evacuated after one of them was shot at. On 21 November, a weapon was aimed at two nurses. Finally, on 10 November, the directors at the MSF France headquarters decided that Coordinator Patrick Vial, who had been on the receiving end of death threats over several months and ordered to get out of Somalia, had to leave.

'Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), 18 September 1992 (in English).

Extract:
The dangers of bringing succour to Somalia's starving millions were also highlighted Thursday when five relief workers of the French medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and two AFP journalists were held hostage for an hour in Mogadishu's Medina hospital by a Somali brandishing a hand grenade. The Somali, a hospital employee, was enraged because he had started receiving half his wages in food instead of cash, said Xavier Lasalle of MSF.

'Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), 1 October, 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Staff of the French medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) were prevented from entering the southern city of Merka, about 60 kilometres (35 miles) south of Mogadishu, by clan fighting on Tuesday, relief workers said.

'Evaluation **Report** Baidoa', MSF Holland, June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
• 14/10/1992, partial evacuation of the team. Rumours that Morgan was planning to attack Baidoa. After one week the team returned.
• 21/10/1992, burglary in radio-room, MSF guards shoot through the closed door of the radio-room. The backyard, where burglars entered, is found filled with torn bushes.
• 07/11/1992, a team member shot at, the bullet hits the ground by his feet. Followed with a partial evacuation as a sign to the population that this is unacceptable.
• 22/11/1992, gun aimed at two expatriate nurses, the HoM [head of mission/coordinator] suggests reducing the number of team members.

Fax from Frédéric Vigneau, MSF France Assistant Coordinator to MSF France Directors, 25 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Over the past two months, discussions between the MoH [Ministry of Health] (and the authorities at Difger/Medina hospitals) and MSF (Patrick [Vial]) have deteriorated to the extent where they [have become] almost impossible. A letter has been written by four people working at this ministry [...] asking for Patrick to be dismissed as MSF General Coordinator.
The letter discredits Patrick in the following terms: his refusal to cooperate with the MoH [Ministry of Health], he doesn't respond to summonses to appear, shows contempt towards MoH representatives, insults them, etc. It was sent to Pr. Isse and all these people referred the matter to General Aidid, who apparently approved it. How did he approve it? Did he make the connection with the latest meeting, which was courteous but heated?
What does seem clear is that Aidid was not behind the letter (the one we received) but was in full agreement with it, all the more because apparently they said they would resign or stop work if Patrick was to return and stay in the country. The idea of the letter had taken shape before the PSP ['Populations in Precarious Situations' – MSF training] issue, which really accelerated the process and, most of all, took it to the next level, i.e. political. [...]

Why political?
It appears that the letters inviting two doctors to attend PSP training were formulated differently in the north and the south – official in the north, personal in the south. Clearly, Patrick recognised Interim President Ali Mahdi and his Ministry of Health but 'bypassed' the one in the south. The people in the south, having been informed by those in the north (sic), demanded an explanation and, more importantly, the right to choose which person would be the best to attend this type of conference.
This is when he says things really started going downhill. I quote: "Patrick's categorical refusal to understand that he personally doesn't have the right to choose and (therefore) worse, his refusal to recognise or go through the MoH! [Patrick said] that if the MoH didn't accept his proposal, MSF would close down its activities and, to cap it all, Pat left the room saying 'fucking...' and slammed the door behind him (the Somali interpretation of events)." So here it is, a summary of what he is reproaching Patrick for and why they are asking for him to be replaced. It seems that they consider it unacceptable to have left the room so abruptly and [shows] a huge lack of respect to call the MoH 'fucking...' – not to mention the shame attached to such a word, etc.
After some discussion, Pr. Isse argues that there is definitely room for negotiation, but there's no question of Patrick returning in the short term until all of this has been discussed with a director from Paris. That his return might be seen as an affront by the people who were insulted and that they appear prepared to act on their [own] conditions, i.e. to actually stop work; in which case he would have to ask for Pat to be dismissed within 24 hours, etc...
He also expresses their satisfaction that MSF has been present since the beginning of the war and their 'support' for the NGO; this is why they are asking MSF to send a replacement and not to dismiss Pat within the next 24 hours. They don't understand why it's such a problem, given that they are happy for us to be there and want to cooperate with us as best they can... They say they sent the letter to UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia) for information but there's no way it should get involved in the issue, which involves MSF and a specific case, and the USC through the MoH.

In this fax I want to relate the facts and details as they've been presented to me so that you can discuss how we can or should address this issue. Of course MSF's strategy regarding sending people for PSP training – a Paris headquarters initiative – was discussed, like we do in lots of other countries. We also need to take into consideration that there is a nationalist upsurge within the SNA (Somali National Alliance), if I can put it this way, and that this situation falls in with their new strategy of wanting to 'orchestrate' aid in general, and more particularly, deciding which, what, how, the UN and NGOs ought to intervene in their country.
During our meeting with Mohammed Awale (Chairman for International Relations), it was clear that they were 'fed up' with getting no feedback from foreign agencies and the colonialist perception that that implies. He also expressed the Somalis' frustration in general and that of the 'leaders' in particular, with this impression of 'colonisers' having the right to do whatever they want in the name of humanitarian aid and to raise their flags wherever they like. Aware of the fragmentation of the country and the ensuing clan divisions, he also declared that however low the country has fallen right now, there are, according to the different regions, local, administrative, political, and religious authorities that must be referred to (North Moga, South Moga, Bosaso, Kismayo, Hargeisa, etc).

'**Activity Report** August, September, October, November 1992', MSF France Somalia, Brigitte Doppler, Patrick Vial, 2 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
II-Mogadishu
[...] Important: it has been increasingly difficult to manage medical staff (MSF and non-MSF) wage demands over the past three months. [At the] end of October hospital personnel began a strike that lasted over ten days. During this time, we were not allowed into the hospital. Beginning in November, staff from the MoH and the hospital confronted us with the following ultimatum: Either MSF agrees to take charge of refurbishing the hospital and the payroll, or leaves MEDINA. So, we have withdrawn from the hospital and we're still denied access – even to visit some of our patients! In any event, our withdrawal was to be expected, as surgery is no longer an urgent requirement in MOGADISHU.
Furthermore, IMC took over DIGFER GENERAL HOSPITAL completely (salaries, medical supplies, etc.). Subjected to the same pressure as MSF, IMC decided to agree to the conditions that precipitated our 'dismissal' from MEDINA. DIGFER has the capacity to admit emergencies during quiet periods like now. So there are, in principle, no objective reasons for maintaining the mission. It remains to be decided if we need to keep a VISIBLE activity in MOGA, in which case we could consider resuming management of some of our clinics with real follow-up and training, and to employ staff.

Minutes of Meeting of Department of Operations, MSF France, 3 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: P. Vial is less worried than we are about the fax. We're waiting to see what Dom[inique] M[artin] thinks, but those present are divided on the question of negotiating Patrick's staying or leaving. The feeling is that the situation is out of our control. Rony B[rauman] and Bernard P[écoul] are prepared to go to Moga.

Minutes of Meeting of Department of Operations, MSF France, 10 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: the ultimatum concerning Patrick ends today. Bernard is going to precipitate the outcome of the issue: Patrick is in danger and MSF has nothing to gain by continuing this trial of strength. Patrick is to leave Somalia.

I was declared 'persona non grata', as were the UNICEF representative and one other person [from Save the Children]. In my case, it was, amongst others, because of a grim internal thing where I was against certain things like a bigger supply of fuel for one hospital rather than another. Basically, it wasn't going very well with some people close to Aidid. However, one of the main reasons for asking me to leave was the fact that I invited two doctors to participate in the PSP, one from Aidid's camp and one from Ali Mahdi's. Aidid's clan really didn't like that at all, especially the way of formulating the letters of invitation. The one for Ali Mahdi was addressed to 'Mr President', and the one for Aidid to 'General Aidid'. It wasn't even me who sent the letter; it was headquarters in Paris. Aidid got to hear that he wasn't addressed as 'President' but as 'General' and he was offended. I received threats: if I didn't get out within three days, they would get me. I didn't believe it because I'd already received similar threats. But headquarters decided it would be better if I left, which I did in November 1992. I came back to Mogadishu a few months later, in July 1993. Aidid invited me for lunch and expressed regrets. He acknowledged he had been deceived by his circle.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

The massive United Nations aid operations were regularly disrupted by the prevailing insecurity in the country. On 8 October 1992, food aid airdrops for four Somali towns were suspended and staff from humanitarian organisations evacuated from Bardhere, a town under the control of General Aidid, but threatened with attack by a faction led by Siad Barre's son-in-law. The airdrops started up again on 11 October and were suspended again on 23 October. The 500 Pakistani UN peacekeepers were prevented from deploying in the port and at Mogadishu airport by General Aidid's forces. The general demanded the constitution of a police unit, with the help of international forces, which would in effect amount to a recognition of his authority.
"A non-governmental organisation representative working in Somalia since the beginning of the conflict," – probably MSF – told AFP, "NGOs found it easier to reach agreement with the different clans on delivery and transport of aid when the UN was not present in Mogadishu."

'Aid Operations Threatened by Insecurity', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 8 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Aid operations for four Somali towns were suspended on Thursday and humanitarian organisation staff were evacuated from Bardhere after the assassination of a Somali UN guard. [...]
A Canadian Air Force C-130 transport aircraft has evacuated nine members of organisations in Bardhere (south of Somalia) to Nairobi, according to Canadian sources. It should return to Bardhere on Thursday to evacuate all remaining members of the humanitarian organisations still present: CARE (International), Save The Children Fund (UK), Action Against Hunger (France) and the International Rescue Committee [IRC] (USA). [...]
Security issues have also led to the American Air Force diverting its humanitarian aid flights from Saco Uen and Hudur (south of Somalia) to Baidoa (centre), United Nations representatives have reported. American flights to Beledweyne (west) have started up again after being suspended for three weeks because of security issues, and have also been diverted to Baidoa (west) because of the rains, says Francis Mwanza, a World Food Programme (WFP) representative.
Relief agencies have also reported that members of humanitarian organisations in Beledweyne have received death threats. "Stopping aid operations in Bardhere would have a serious impact," declared Mr Mwanza, "there are 60,000 men, women and children in Bardhere relying on food aid."

'The UN has Re-launched Airdrops of Food Aid in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 11 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
WFP has re-launched airdrops of food aid in Somalia. A Canadian military C-130 aircraft dropped 12 tonnes of wheat on Dinsoor (west of the country), where some 40,000 people are affected by the famine, the international agency has announced. Over the next few weeks, around 1,000 tonnes of food aid will be dropped in regions in the centre and south of Somalia. The operation will be deployed using Canadian, German, and US military aircraft, says a WFP press release. WFP has decided to drop food aid to the towns of Bardhere, Saco Uen, Wajid, Hudur, and Baidoa. The organisation has set up mobile teams to go to the areas where the aid is being dropped to assist Somali village chiefs with distributing the food.

According to WFP, 1,000 people are dying every day from hunger and disease. Beginning September, WFP airdropped 150 tonnes of food aid to Tigieglo and El Garas, remote towns in the centre of the country, and to isolated villages around Hudur. Over the past six weeks, WFP has organised air transport of an average 210 tonnes of food aid per day in Somalia, but it has mainly been delivered to towns with runways big enough to take large planes. A shortage of trucks and spare parts, poor roads, insecurity, and looting have all prevented the delivery of food aid to remote areas, forcing people to go to towns to get food.

'UN Peacekeepers' Mission Sand-bound in Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 24 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The 500 Pakistani UN peacekeepers that arrived in the capital Mogadishu in September to protect humanitarian aid operations have still not been deployed in the port or at the airport. Insecurity is growing because of the dogged opposition of warlord General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who controls most of the town. The port, airport, town centre, and suburbs of Mogadishu are still in the hands of General Aidid's men, clans fighting over bits of land, and *shiftas* (bandits), for whom a city ruled by the gun suits them all too well. [...]
At USC headquarters in Mogadishu, General Aidid's international relations advisor tries to be reassuring. "We're not preventing the peacekeepers from deploying, we are just discussing training a police force who will be responsible for protecting them," explains Mohammed Awale. The police force, according to General Aidid's adviser, will be operational "as soon as it gets uniforms". General Aidid pursues his idea of setting up a police force with the help of the international community, which would, in effect, constitute recognition of his authority in the south of Mogadishu, to the detriment of his rival, Interim President Ali Mahdi Muhammad, in the north.
Although General Aidid has agreed, after months of refusing, to the presence of 500 UN peacekeepers in Mogadishu, his demands are allowing him to block UN involvement in the Somali conflict. According to a representative from a non-governmental organisation working in Somalia since the beginning of the conflict, NGOs found it easier to reach an agreement with the different clans on the delivery and transport of aid when the UN was not present in Mogadishu.

Two months after the launch of the international aid mobilisation effort for Somalia, the international political and humanitarian stakeholders saw that aid alone was not enough to stabilise the situation. A political solution was needed, but the propositions diverged on the form it should take.
On 10 October 1992, the UN asked the donor countries to support its '100-day action programme' of US$82.7 million to provide assistance to the Somalis.

'Looking for a Political Solution for the "Hell that is Somalia"', **AFP** (France), Serge Arnold, Nairobi, 5 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
While weeks of international humanitarian aid have reduced hunger and death, it has not reduced the insecurity of armed insanity. The prevailing feeling is that "something else needs to be found, that the rules of the game need to be changed," as Barnett Baron, President of North American organisation Save the Children, puts it. Andrew Natsios, American Aid Coordinator for Somalia, says, "If we don't set something up, we'll be here forever, and we don't have the means."
The indisputable conviction that humanitarian aid alone is incapable of finding a solution for Somalia has resulted in the revival of the quest for a political solution, which UNOSOM Chief of Mission Mr Mohamed Sahnoun is working on. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), long absent from the emergency, has just proposed holding an international

conference. Also, an initiative of the Arab League, a 'national reconciliation conference', is taking shape.
Citing the example of Cambodia, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Kiejman, has called for the implementation of a 'supervisory authority'. Many diplomats in the region favour the notion of a 'UN protectorate'. But observers see this model as highly dangerous. They insist on the Somali people's real attachment to independence, as demonstrated during wars against British, Ethiopian, and Italian colonisers between 1900 and 1920. [...]
Other diplomats are calling for the 'cynical solution'; i.e. accession to power of the most forceful military leader, as their view is that Somalia "can only function with an iron fist". However, no 'warlord' seems able to impose himself, and that is without taking into account that the former British protectorate, Somaliland, seceded in May 1991, observing that "unity has failed, leaving a legacy of death and indescribable misery." Furthermore, some Somali intellectuals away from the country think that it would be futile to want to re-establish a united Somalia. Similarly, Frank Crigler, former US Ambassador to Somalia, was quoted in the Herald Tribune as saying, "the notion of a territory with defined borders and a central government is a western concept, artificially imposed on Somalia." And on their return from Somalia to Nairobi last Thursday, the heads of US NGOs and Mr Natsios suggested a return to the traditional tribal structure and restoring the authority of "elders" in clans, which would no longer be led astray by young men toting AK-47s and M616s. "Naive optimism", retorts a director of a French NGO; "the elders' authority is in a state of collapse."
Islam also remains as a 'solution', or as a 'threat'. A real bond for Somalis, it is emerging in a radical form in the northeast of the country because the Cushitic language and Sunnite religion alone are the true cornerstones of an uncertain Somali 'unity'.

'UN Emergency Programme: Race Against Death in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Geneva, 10 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
To prevent one million Somalis from dying of hunger and disease, the United Nations will be asking donor countries on Monday and Tuesday in Geneva to support a '100-day action programme' to accelerate humanitarian assistance in Somalia. US$82.7 million will be required by the end of the year for immediate deployment of the action plan to be implemented with the assistance of NGOs. The UN wants to provide "a massive injection of food aid'", expand a vaccination campaign, urgently improve the quality of water and hygiene, build shelters, provide people with clothing, and give them seeds, tools, vaccines, and food for their livestock all at the same time so as to stave off a new exodus of refugees and encourage people to return [...]

On 27 October 1992, UN special representative to Somalia, Mohamed Sahnoun, who had criticised the slow progress of some UN agencies, was forced to resign, in spite of the support of five members of the Security Council and that of all the humanitarian stakeholders. Everyone recognised his achievements in his political negotiations with the different Somali factions and feared the potentially damaging consequences of his departure. He left office on 29 October. In a press release, MSF France regretted the resignation and expressed concern that it would lead to a worsening situation.

'The Resignation of Mr Sahnoun Risks Compromising the Efforts Undertaken for Somalia', **Press Release** No. 25, MSF France, 28 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
While Somalia is still in the throes of acute famine and continued fighting, Médecins Sans Frontières fears that the departure of Mr Sahnoun, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, will put a halt to the efforts undertaken both from the political and the humanitarian points of view. Mr Sahnoun has a perfect understanding of Somalia's complex problems. His resignation, if it is accepted, risks compromising discussions on a political solution to the conflicts now devastating the country.
Médecins Sans Frontières also reiterates that the situation remains catastrophic in Somalia, and the survival of hundreds of thousands of people still depends on the effectiveness of the relief that Mr Sahnoun's departure may jeopardise. Médecins Sans Frontières currently has around 40 feeding centres for children in the regions of Merka-Brava (Merka, Qoryooley, Bulo Marer and Brava), Kismayo-Jilib, Wajid, Hudur, and Kansardhere. The organisation also runs medical and surgical programmes in Mogadishu and Baidoa.

'Mr Sahnoun's Departure Illustrates the Limits of UN Employees and its Action', **AFP** (France), New York, 29 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Mr Boutros-Ghali accepted Mr Sahnoun's resignation, in spite of diplomatic interventions that continued until Thursday at the UN headquarters in New York. 60-year-old Mr Sahnoun, who was appointed United Nations representative to Somalia last April, sent his letter of resignation on Monday after having received a firm call to order from Mr Boutros-Ghali regarding his public declarations criticising the ineffective delivery of humanitarian aid operations in Somalia. During a press conference held on Thursday in Mogadishu, the Algerian diplomat stated that in spite of his "bitter experience with UN bureaucracy", he could have carried on on a temporary basis, but that his proposal has not been accepted.
Mr Sahnoun has criticised on several occasions the UN's slow progress in organising aid operations for Somalia. According to him, the country would not have been plunged into chaos if the UN had intervened immediately after the fall of President Siad Barre in January 1991. Mr Sahnoun, who has been Algerian ambassador in Paris and Washington, has also reproached certain UN agencies for not being on top of the situation [...]
According to diplomats, the five permanent members of the Security Council (USA, France, Russia, China, Great Britain) intervened on behalf of Mr Sahnoun, emphasising his progress on the political level, and especially with regard to organising a national conciliation conference. Visibly, the Algerian ambassador has won the trust of some local leaders. He wanted to mend the fabric of Somali society and has made fruitful contacts with the different countries in the region, the same sources say.

'Five Organisations Providing Aid to Somalia Protest the Departure of UN Representative', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 31 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Declaring that he was leaving Somalia against his will, Mr Sahnoun resigned this week after being reprimanded by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for having publicly denounced the international organisation's lack of effectiveness in the delivery of food aid. [...] In a press release faxed on Saturday to Nairobi from Somali capital Mogadishu, the French medical aid organisation Médecins Sans Frontières, the American organisation International Medical Corps, the British organisation Save The Children Fund, and the international aid agencies CARE and Concern Worldwide said that Sahnoun's departure may jeopardise the aid operation.

In mid-October 1992, while reports on Somalia continued, MSF France teams in Somalia said they wanted to communicate on the shortage and poor quality of food provided by international aid.
At the beginning of November, given the incapacity of UN forces to improve security conditions, the MSF France directors stepped up their advocacy efforts with the main stakeholders and decided to re-launch their communications to highlight the slow progress and mistakes of the UN machine.
On 10 November, the MSF teams in Hudur attested that the death rate remains extremely high, in spite of the incoming food aid. They said that the population has neither the strength nor the will to go to feeding centres anymore. The teams thus set up a system of home visits.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 13 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
French magazine *Télérama* devotes its front page to Somalia & a six-page article by Nicole du Roy quotes MSF several times.
The field would like to communicate on the shortage of food and the poor quality of what little does arrive. See with Operations if our communications can adopt a more aggressive tone. *France 3* Marseille: special report on Somalia on 30 October with Rony as guest interviewee.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 14 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Dominique (Martin) reports on the two-day meeting organised by the UN with the donor countries to secure the US$80 million required for the '100-day Action Programme' to accelerate emergency humanitarian assistance in Somalia.
Ministers from all the major countries attended, along with the main participating NGOs. Programme operations and the beneficiaries' provisional budgets will be made available (WFP, who will call on CARE for much of the implementation; UNICEF, who will call on the NGOs; WHO; and [UN]HCR). WFP will inject 100,000 tonnes of wheat and sorghum that

have already been bought and are stored in Mombasa, into commercial channels. Sahnoun is in charge of the operation and will supervise UNOSOM. ICRC will distribute 80,000 tonnes of rice during the same period.
Patrick Vial reiterated MSF's demands; real coordination by the UN agencies at long last, UN field officers in the field to negotiate the security of humanitarian aid teams, decentralised aid distribution points, aid to be delivered quickly and in sufficient quantities, and the '100-day' operation to establish specific objectives. Rony thinks that we shouldn't hold back on reminding them of the slow beginning and slow progress of the UN operations, that we're not going to sign a blank cheque to the UN, and that we expect them to be more effective in the field.
Decisions:
Michel [Fiszbin, Communications Director] asks if it isn't possible to review our position on Somalia in light of the continuing catastrophic situation and renewed fighting. A special management team meeting (also to include Dominique Martin and Patrick Vial) will be held at 4:30 pm on Monday 19 October to look at the issues, analyse the UN's 100-day action programme, and discuss the role we plan to take.

Minutes of Meeting of Department of Operations, MSF France, 20 October 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Summary of the points brought up and discussed
• Our position: "A massive influx of food will reduce tension" is no longer true. We'll just say, "a massive influx of food is necessary." From now on, we'll try and be more modest in the solutions to be sought for the country. We'll avoid bold, irrevocable, and binding declarations of principle that we end up having to revise every three months.
• Aidid has the power to stop his troops looting. But now it's the only way for his fighters to get paid.
• UN 100-day action programme looks good on paper. Some of the objectives are unrealistic in the long term. [...]
• Now that the UN has got the money (US$80 million), we'll be waiting for them in the field and we'll respond, in writing, from there and in Europe.
• UN peacekeepers: "We agree; it just needs to be negotiated before they arrive." But if they ask us, we're against a supervisory authority for the country.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Team, MSF France, 4 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Should we go further in criticising the UN '100-day' Somalia operation? SCF and ICRC are going a lot further than us. Brigitte and Fred's paper is openly critical of the operation. How should we follow up on it?
It is decided to communicate again on the issue ('100-day' operation, and not on 'presence of UN peacekeepers'), organise an ambassadors' breakfast and lobbying [...]
Increasing insecurity in Somalia. We've been thrown out of Medina hospital. Negotiations regarding Patrick are at a standstill. We are no longer in a position of strength in the country.

'Fatal Sense of Resignation: Many Somalis Quietly Shun Aid, Await Death', ***Chicago Tribune*** (USA), Liz Sly, 10 November 1992 (in English).

Extract:

Last month, the Belgian relief agency Médecins Sans Frontières began a series of hut-to-hut visits to survey death rates in Hoddur, a small, remote town near Somalia's border with Ethiopia. They made a startling discovery: Many of the dead and dying had not even attempted to receive the free food that has been arriving in a steady stream for the past two months.

Instead, they found dozens of people, most of them children, simply sitting in their huts waiting for a slow, agonizing death. "People are getting tired. They're so used to being hungry they can't fight it anymore," said Michele Deschamps, a nurse with MSF in Hoddur. "We find people living very close to the feeding centres, but they don't come. They're just staying at home to die." In one hut, Deschamps found a mother sitting on the floor beside a child wrapped in a blanket. "We asked her, 'What is the matter with the child,' and she said she didn't know," Deschamps recalled. "When we looked, we found the child was dead. The mother didn't know her child was dead."

Relief workers believe that people are dying throughout Somalia because, for a variety of economic, social, and cultural reasons, they do not seek the help being offered by the outside world. It is a phenomenon they are trying to understand as they grapple to bring Africa's worst recorded famine under control.

Abdelgadir Ker, a Somali volunteer with MSF, now carries out daily hut-to-hut visits to help those children most at risk and to tell their parents to take them to a feeding centre. He strides into huts and bellows at mothers who have not sought help for their children. Within an hour on a recent morning, Ker came across some two-dozen feeble, hungry children who were not receiving food. [...] Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) has five kitchens that serve three meals daily to malnourished children. Some die without ever regaining the ability to hold down their food. But after a week of eating regularly, the chances of recovery are good. [...] Nicolas De Metz, MSF's coordinator in the Hoddur region, believes that prolonged exposure to death and dying has weakened the will to live among those most severely afflicted and induced Darwinian-type survival instincts in others. "After many months of seeing death all around you, you become fatalistic. You start to accept the dying," he said. "When all your family is dying, you just try to save the strongest."

[...] The death rate, which peaked last month at 100 a day because of an outbreak of measles, still stands at the high level of 50 to 80 a day out of a population of some 25,000.

On 12 November 1992, the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* published an article by MSF France Coordinators in Somalia, Brigitte Doppler and Frédéric Vigneau. The article described and denounced in no uncertain terms the mismanagement and ineffectiveness of the UN humanitarian aid operation while Somalis were still racked by famine.

'Somalia: America Flies Over a Starving Country', ***Le Monde*** (France), Brigitte Doppler et Frédéric Vigneau, MSF France Coordinators in Somalia, 12 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:

There are dozens of ways to talk about Somalia and so much to say: the politics, the economy, the humanitarian situation, the military, and the history... And then, in the middle of all that, there's us, with what remains of our sensitivity hidden behind the mask of our professionalism. And the days when, exhausted with showing the horror to hordes of journalists, our anger and revulsion are too great to not give into some soul-searching. It's now been six months since we discovered the sheer scale of the Somali drama playing out in the region of Merka. It's been six months now that every day, in spite of our high-protein pastes and ORS mixtures, so many people continue to die, right in front of us, like it's normal. Everywhere there are the same images of ghostly shadows, their eyes looking to heaven. Survival here depends on an aeroplane that might or might not come and might stop, if the landing strip is in good enough condition, or on a hypothetical truck, which some days comes, and others, doesn't. Between each food distribution the waiting starts all over again and meanwhile, the weakest continue to die while the others get still frailer.

It is true that the convoys are often looted, but at least they exist and are full right up to the top with food. The same can't be said of the mighty US airlift operation – the C-130s whose aerial display above the graveyard that is Somalia fools nobody. In a vast wave of 'generosity', the United States has launched a humanitarian operation of a scale not seen in over ten years: 85,000 tonnes of food in 1992 and 143,000 tonnes in 1993 are the quantities promised to the Somalis. An impressive aerial display has started, and the DART [Disaster Assistance Response Team] is supervising the operation. Logistics are based in Kenya, a country in need of food aid too, as it now hosts over 300,000 Somali and Ethiopian refugees and is also having to deal with the drought afflicting the north.

The American operation, if you believe what their authorities are saying, is conducted in close cooperation with the United Nations, present in the country since April 1992 (over one year after the beginning of the war). It was supposed to start at the end of August. Hard for the members of the United Nations to know more – in spite of the rhetoric on coordination of the aid, Mr Bassiouni, aid operations' representative for the United Nations, representatives from UNICEF, WFP, UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] etc, went to Nairobi for a meeting scheduled for the launch of the operation. They wandered around the American offices for over an hour before discovering that the meeting was being held in Mombasa, 500 kilometres away. "Now we are here, we are going to move in and move fast," say the Americans. We're all ready. Brace yourselves, Somalis, it's going to rain food aid by the tonne!

Coordination and supervision (who? how?) are not considerations: the deployment and scale of such an operation don't allow for the time to think about all that. WFP is put in charge of food aid that's brought in and then passes over storage and distribution to NGOs like CARE and Concern.

There's no turning back – the propellers are spinning and Somali stomachs should soon be satiated. All the United Nations can do is stand idle and watch the comings and goings in the skies above the few happy towns of Bardhere, Baidoa, Beledweyne, Saco Uen, Hudur and Wajid.

The first cracks soon appear: technical problems with the C-130s that need extensive maintenance in Mombasa, the pilots' lack of experience and refusal to land on certain runways, even though a technician on the ground assures them that there is no risk, and some planes come under fire. And, above all, the C-130s don't fly with a full load: their cargo never exceeds nine tonnes, whereas our planes carry 15 tonnes in similar conditions.

So the magnificent operation is in disarray: flights suspended at Beledweyne for a fortnight for security reasons, cancellation of flights in Bardhere, reduction in the number of rotations per day in Baidoa (one instead of seven some days) as it is too 'risky', and in Wajid and Hudur we see planes in the sky that then fly off. None of the food promised by the US government has reached the port of Mombasa so far. ICRC and WFP stocks in Kenya are petering out to the tune of the rotations of the US aeroplanes. The latest information is that 71,000 tonnes should arrive soon in the Kenyan port (69,000 tonnes of cereals and 2,000 tonnes of 'miscellaneous').

Quantities are insufficient to set up stocks or launch a general distribution in the surrounding villages. So, increasing numbers of villagers are arriving in towns looking for aid. Grouped together in precarious conditions, the mortality rate is growing at a worrying pace. Over the past couple of weeks we've reached rock bottom with tonnes of wheat grain being delivered from US Aid stocks, as there is no corn flour left. No flourmills have been set up, and cooking this kind of wheat is complicated and doesn't do much good for starving people. If this charade carries a certain weight in the US electoral turbulence, the weight it carries in empty Somali stomachs is more than pitiful. It definitely won't be Somalis, after days of waiting for a few handfuls of wheat grain, who'll contradict us! "Deal with it!"

Baidoa: a cursed town, the chronicle of a death foretold, let's not expound on this nightmare. Foretold, because of the way aid is brought in and managed. Not one United Nations representative, not one safeguard in the murk of the Somali machination. The NGOs are on their own: "Deal with it!" So flag-planting abounds, with those present vetoing the arrival of those who want to come, calling for "common sense" because it serves no purpose to have even more people watching other people die, because the flow of new arrivals must be stemmed and those already uprooted, returned to their homes and their land.

And the United Nations? Despite UNICEF's repeated promises to supply Unimix, teams of vaccinators because we're on the brink of a measles epidemic, drugs, blankets, plastic sheeting etc, nothing has arrived. The potential re-launching by UNDP of activities such as paying local medical teams' wages, managing a central pharmacy – requested by NGOs – is still only at the project stage. But every day we see new UN people arriving. New posts are created, new meetings organised. It's amazing how many meetings there are in this town! The latest complaint from new arrivals is the accommodation shortage and the 20 dollars they pay a day to stay in UN premises.

At least, you may say, the 500 'peacekeepers' have arrived and, after an agreement with the belligerents, are able to get at least some security regulations respected in Mogadishu. During a meeting in September, General Shaheen spelled out their mandate: intervention and security in the port and airport, protecting food aid at the place of unloading and during its transfer to warehouses, and guarding stocks. And in a second phase, guarding expatriate houses. But hang on, we're not there yet! Because, right now, the 'peacekeepers'

are denied access to the port, have had to hire 220 Somalis to ensure security at the international airport, and are unable to ensure security of convoys in Mogadishu. Many of them are ill and have had to be sent to Nairobi. NGOs don't use the airport anymore because of the lack of security.

In six months, much has been written. Terrible pictures appeared on the front pages of all the newspapers and in TV headline news during the summer of 1992, and many innocent people caught up in the media circus have seen more journalists tumbling in than sacks of rice, but the situation remains utterly unacceptable. So, let's show our anger, we who know so well how to prevent governments who like to give themselves good consciences from going round in circles. Let's do for the Somalis what we have been able to do before, elsewhere; we are talking about the most serious emergency since Biafra. Because remaining silent is also to acquiesce, and that would mean having to accept losing part of our soul and convictions along the way.

We'll never be able to say it often enough: the stench of death is everywhere in Somalia.

In Somalia, while General Aidid lost ground and power, attacks against organisations and humanitarian convoys were multiplying. Five hundred UN peacekeepers were deployed at the airport in Mogadishu, but planes bringing aid continued to land at another airport.
On 12 November 1992, a convoy transporting food aid was attacked near Baidoa, a strategically placed town for distributing food to the region of Somalia most affected by the famine. On 16 November, Interim President Ali Mahdi threatened to bomb the port in Mogadishu if aid wasn't delivered to the part of the city under his control. No cargo ships were entering the port.
On 20 November, a group of humanitarian organisations refused the protection of UN guards for their offices in Mogadishu, preferring to rely on their own Somali guards, who, for the most part, were Aidid supporters. Most NGOs deplored the shortage of peacekeepers. On 24 November, a shell hit a WFP ship in the port of Mogadishu. The international airlift to the interior of Somalia was almost at a standstill.

'Threats and Armed Attacks against Humanitarian Organisations are Intensifying', **AFP** (France), Jean-Pierre Campagne, 17 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
"What we are seeing now is a power struggle between General Aidid and the United Nations," a director of one of the main humanitarian organisations working in Somalia said in Nairobi on Tuesday. "This is why we don't want to use the international airport yet, because we are concerned about an attack by supporters of General Aidid, the warlord who controls most of the Somali capital," he explained. Since the deployment of the Pakistani peacekeepers at the airport a week ago, General Aidid has demanded they leave several times. On Friday, a non-identified group fired at the runway, according to a witness who has just returned from Mogadishu.
"The peacekeepers retaliated, none of them was hurt," stressed the witness. On the same day, a member of French organisation AICF was shot in the arm near the village of Medina on the outskirts of Mogadishu. He was one of a group of 21 people from different

aid organisations, including International Medical Corps and Pharmacists Without Borders, returning from the beach. An ICRC vehicle came under fire at the same place an hour earlier. Last week, the director of another humanitarian organisation had to leave Mogadishu after receiving death threats.
A WFP ship transporting 10,000 tonnes of food aid was unable to dock on Monday after being threatened with shelling, and unloading of food aid came to a complete standstill.
On Wednesday evening, a convoy of around 30 trucks belonging to organisation CARE was ambushed on the outskirts of Baidoa in southwest Somalia. At least eight trucks transporting food aid were stolen. According to information obtained by an AFP journalist in Mogadishu, the aggressors were General Aidid fighters.

'Charitable Organisations Refuse UN Protection', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 20 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
"The NGOs have agreed not to ask for the protection of UNOSOM because of the small number of UN soldiers." [...]
Those in charge of the organisations, who have not ruled out calling on the UN soldiers in the event of 'special circumstances', prefer to keep their Somali guards, some of whom are supporters of warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who controls the south of Mogadishu, which is where almost all the NGOs are located. The NGOs pay their Somali guards several thousand francs a day to guard their offices and vehicles.

'Aid Operations Almost at a Standstill in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 25 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
"If the situation gets any worse, we're going to be forced to leave," declared a UN official. But "people are dying at an unprecedented rate because armed looters are hampering the flow of food aid," says WFP Executive Director, Ms Catherine Bertini. Ms Bertini was talking the day after an incident where a WFP ship transporting 10,000 tonnes of wheat was hit by a shell while approaching the port in Mogadishu. The shell appeared to have been fired from the north of the capital, an area controlled by Interim President Ali Mahdi Muhammad, who has been threatening for a long time to attack humanitarian vessels, claiming that his camp has not been receiving any food from the port.
Mr Ali Mahdi apologised to the UN and explained that his supporters had not been informed of his undertaking not to attack the ship. Three other vessels are staying out at sea while they wait for an improvement in the situation. [...]
The international airlift in the interior of the country was all but suspended on Monday after a WFP plane returned from the region of Bardhere (southeast) with its fuselage riddled with bullet holes. The incident wasn't the first of its kind, according to a UN official.
The humanitarian organisations regret that the UN has only sent 500 solders. "Where are the 3,500 soldiers we were promised? What can they do with 500?" complains an exasperated international staff member, who is not alone in criticising the role of the UN. The aid workers estimate that the famine has killed an average of 1,000 Somalis a day in the past five months.

The international press denounced the massive hijacking of aid and racketeering by the different Somali factions, resulting in impotent relief organisations.

'Somali Aid Subjected to the Law of Racketeering', ***Libération*** (France), Stephen Smith, November 27 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Blackmail, gratuitous hostility, physical threats… all in a day's work for humanitarian organisations. The UN now recognises that 70 to 80 per cent of aid is hijacked by armed militias.

[…] Close to 300,000 have died in almost two years, less from the indifference of the outside world than from the hijacking of aid by their fellow countrymen. The UN now recognises that 70 to 80 per cent of aid is hijacked by armed men. The organisation doesn't yet say that a large part of it is, in fact, sold in neighbouring countries, while thousands of Somalis are dying. With connections to the main factions, rich traders use small harbours and new specialist markets in Dado in the northwest, Oula Dalai near the Ethiopian border, and Kismayo to the south, in the farthest reaches of Kenya, to 're-dispatch' food to other countries.

On the stalls in the streets of the Somali 'graveyard town' Baidoa, rice is cheaper than on the international market. Out of six humanitarian aid convoys that left Mogadishu 300 kilometres away, only two were recognisable as such when they arrived in Baidoa. All the others were looted, sometimes every single truck. "Nothing is really lost," an official from WFP consoles himself, not without a sense of helplessness, before going on to add, "after all, the fighters have families too…" Conforming to the law of the jungle, those most in need are largely excluded from the distribution. And it's not them who get the 25,000 francs 'landing fee' charged daily for the landing strip in Baidoa. The airlift delivers humanitarian aid to some, and is a goldmine to others.

Racketeering is entrenched in Somalia and has been long accepted by all aid organisations as a fact of life, so they keep their mouths shut. They pay up to 1,000 francs per day and per vehicle to be followed everywhere they go by a 'Technical', a euphemism for Toyota pickups armed with machine guns or light artillery. There are over 480 used by different UN organisations and the 32 NGOs in Mogadishu. The calculation is simple… add up the cost of maintenance, fuel, wages of the armed escorts, rent – at a premium – of some hundred villas, the 'tithe' paid to the militias on each load of aid, and the salaries of personnel which, given the new scale decreed last week by General Aidid's faction, should increase fivefold.

According to one conservative estimate, a total of some US$45 million is now being spent every month in providing assistance to Somali victims. For a target population of around 4.5 million, this amounts to US$10 per inhabitant. Quite enough to survive, even if only half ends up where it should. Yet the aid funding is mainly being used to fuel a war economy, which, in effect, serves to perpetuate the suffering. So it is logical that the militias demand to be paid in dollars, as dollars are more readily accepted on the arms markets. And on top of this continuing fool's game, the foreign Samaritans shoulder additional structural or one-off costs: payment of 900 'guards' (looters in uniform) in the port of Mogadishu or, for example, the remuneration of an extended family who managed to obstruct a huge irrigation project on the outskirts of Mogadishu for four months. They only gave their agreement the day when the UN hired the whole family for tasks that it would be hard to define.

Threatened with physical abuse, trapped in their humanitarian consciences and often in their determination to remain present, whatever the cost, in a country that is the beacon

of the 'charity business', aid organisations are now to be treated like indentured servants. Just a short while ago, an armed gang burst into a British NGO's courtyard in Mogadishu and opened fire to 'protest' against the late payment for the hire of a vehicle. The guards at the house reposted and fired warning shots. No significant harm or damage done but, nevertheless, the head of the militias presented them with the bill the next day, US$2,000 for a bullet supposedly lodged in the windscreen of his Mercedes and almost US$3,000 for three wounded men whom he wouldn't let them see. The NGO paid up. "So that they'll leave us alone..."

Did they have a choice? Well, once the protective universalism afforded by humanitarian emblems is abandoned and the provision of costly and invasive 'security' by rival militias is accepted, it becomes a moot issue. The aid agencies, which have followed this through to its logical conclusion, are just beginning to realise, and are urging for the 'effective protection by UN peacekeepers'. But wanting to transform Somalia into a 'security zone' by waging war on war is ultimately more realistic than having accepted yesterday to assist victims flanked by their persecutors.

It's farcical, like the foreigners who come to help Somalia and can't even walk freely around the streets of Mogadishu. And in fact, they don't even consider it an option. Not only because they are scared – justifiably – of being mugged, but also because they are well placed to know they could be risking their lives; their own militia who they pay to escort their vehicles could murder them to keep their jobs.

III. "SO YOU LIKED BEIRUT? YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE MOGADISHU."

In the USA, while Bill Clinton prepared to take over from President George Bush, Somalia and the role of US troops in ongoing military operations was the subject of heated debate. In the face of what was seen as the inertia of the United Nations, there was increasing demand for direct intervention by US forces in the areas most severely affected by the famine.

'Shoot to Feed Somalia', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Leslie Gelb, 19 November 1992 (in English).

Extract:

Key Bush aides will gather in the White House tomorrow to tell the President that he should not duck the mass slaughter and starvation of Somalia's civil war and then dump the problem on Bill Clinton. They will urge him to energize the U.N. now to provide more food, more transport and most importantly more troops with more powerful weapons and a mandate to be aggressive -- using U.S. forces for logistical support only.

For many following the Somali crisis, this plan does not go far or fast enough. Some, like Senator Nancy Kassebaum, Republican of Kansas, would work through the U.N. but stiffen U.N. forces with U.S. firepower. Many others, including disaster relief experts like Fred Cuny, feel the situation is so dire and the U.N. so slow and ineffectual that U.S. forces should intervene immediately without waiting for U.N. approval. [...] Administration officials and Senator Kassebaum share one good point. The U.S. cannot simply dispatch forces and ignore the Security Council. Washington has been trying to nurture the U.N.'s peacekeeping role for two years now, and properly so. I would like nothing better than for the U.N. to do the job it should be doing in Somalia. But the organization has shown

almost no interest in the Somali nightmare. Its inefficient bureaucracy is already sputtering under the load of a dozen mostly new peacekeeping operations.
Even if the U.N. does get its act together somewhat, member nations are not likely to give U.N. forces in Somalia the necessary freedom to fight. As of now, the 500 Pakistanis already there and the 3,000 more promised can only fire if fired upon. That is insufficient. So are the light weapons authorized for those troops. Yet U.N. officials and members hesitate to go further. Interfering massively without host government approval and without a cease-fire would violate U.N. dogma. But legalistic scruples make no sense in Somalia, which has no government and is in a state of anarchy.
Even if the Security Council overcomes such nit-picking, the nations providing the forces may not want to fight. The Egyptians, Canadians and Belgians, who have offered to fill the additional 3,000 "guard" billets, do not seem keen about combat. It has been weeks since they volunteered, and their soldiers are not near departure. This is where the Kassebaum approach comes in. Even if the U.N. does give the green light for tougher military action, she anticipates that its members might resist risking combat, especially without direct U.S. help. If so, the U.S. should volunteer its own forces.
More likely, however, the U.N. will just dither. In that case, bring on the Cuny plan. Before working in Somalia, Mr Cuny was deeply involved in Operation Provide Comfort, which protected the Kurds in northern Iraq against Saddam Hussein and fed them. His plan for the Somalis worked for the Kurds against a far more formidable foe than the Somali war chiefs -- with few U.S. troops, with little bloodshed and without the U.S. sinking into a military quagmire. Mr Cuny wants U.S. forces to set up a security zone in southern Somalia, where the starvation is most severe. He thinks that job can be done by no more than 2,500 U.S. marines with air and naval support plus about 1,000 troops from other nations. "We can't impose a peace," he sensibly acknowledges, "but we can create a safe haven to allow the voluntary relief organizations to strike at the heart of the famine." Conscience demands no less.
Administration officials already admit they need a "shoot-to-feed" policy. Now they should act on what many of them privately believe -- our own forces must do the shooting, and, if the U.N. dawdles, go it alone.

On her return from Somalia on 26 November 1992, actress and UNHCR 'goodwill ambassador' Sophia Loren declared that the United Nations is unable to go it alone and that the international community must "bring peace" to Somalia.

'Sophia Loren Makes a Heartfelt Appeal for Peace in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 26 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Tears in her eyes, Italian actress and UNHCR 'goodwill ambassador' Sophia Loren launched a passionate appeal on Thursday for peace in Somalia – a country devastated by famine and civil war – "before we lose a whole generation of children." "I've seen the hell that is Somalia, and it's going to haunt me until my dying day," declared the actress, who has just visited the region to raise funds for the starving people of Somalia. Sophia Loren's voice was trembling with emotion as she related, during a press conference, the four days she spent visiting emergency camps in Somalia – where some 1,000 people are dying everyday – and refugee camps in Kenya. [...]

"We are a civilised world, we are all responsible," the actress declared. "The United Nations can't go it alone, the international community has the means to bring peace to Somalia; I pray that it finds the political will to do so."
The United Nations is considering reinforcing security in Somalia, where international aid was brought to a standstill, because of repeated attacks by armed gangs.

The following day, UN sources circulated information that United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was preparing to propose to the Security Council the deployment to Somalia of a UN-led multinational force. The force, mainly US troops supplemented by soldiers from other volunteer states, would be under US command.

'Moving Towards Intervention by a Multinational Force in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Luis Torres de la Llosa, 28 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
According to a senior UN official, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is preparing to recommend sending a UN-led multinational force of up to 40,000 soldiers to distribute humanitarian aid in Somalia. The force, comprised mainly of American soldiers, would operate out of bases in Kenya and Saudi Arabia. It may also include troops from other NATO nations and any countries willing to volunteer their forces, added the official. [...]
The force would be under the command of the United States and act under Chapter 7 of the Charter of the United Nations. The United States is apparently ready to volunteer 30,000 soldiers, but this number could be reduced depending on the number of troops provided by other countries, he said.
"This is the option most likely to be chosen by the members of the Security Council at the beginning of next week," added the senior official after a second meeting on Friday of the Somalia 'Working Group' set up by Mr Boutros-Ghali [...] The first priority of the operation would be to take control of Somali ports, airports and land-based communication networks, and possibly to construct airstrips in hitherto inaccessible regions. Some non-aligned Council members have expressed their reservations regarding an operation that could create a precedent for military intervention in the name of humanitarian interference, and their hope is that it will be included within the framework of the UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).

The same day, during an interview-debate with French daily *Libération* on the topic 'should military action be part of humanitarian action?' Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, argued against military intervention in the name of humanitarian aid. His remarks were quoted in US newspaper *The New York Times*.

'From Sarajevo to Mogadishu: Should Military Action be Part of Humanitarian Action?' ***Libération*** (France), Interview-Debate with Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, Pierre Hassner, Director of Research at CERI,[11] Hassen Fodha, Director of the United Nations Information Centre, and Maurice Schmidt, former Chief of Staff of the French armed forces, convened by Patrick Sabatier and Michel Samson, 26 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Libération: The expression 'shoot to feed' is heard a lot right now in the US. Do we have the right to go to war to provide humanitarian aid?

Rony Brauman: I want to insist on what for us is fundamental, and that is principles. Humanitarian action must be transparent, aim to preserve life and human dignity, and be non-discriminatory and non-violent.

Personally, I'm not a pacifist. But I am truly horrified when I imagine myself, an MSF doctor, turning up like some kind of after-sales service for an army describing itself as "humanitarian". That all that tops the international hierarchy of values and translates into acts, ok. But humanitarian action should not hide behind guns, otherwise it will be robbed of its meaning. Without principles, humanitarian action becomes nebulous and loses its substance. Furthermore, in the field it requires room for manoeuvre, autonomy, and trust of people with few moral or humanitarian ideals but who know that the objective is to care for people. I fully agree with General Schmitt when he says that populations are not always external to the conflict they find themselves embroiled in. But civilians and disguised militiamen have a right to assistance just like everyone else. [...]

Libération: [...] In Somalia, part of the challenge consists of knowing which army, which militia will get hold of the rice. How can humanitarian action extricate itself from this conundrum? [...]

Rony Brauman: Humanitarian aid cannot be at the origin of a war. That would totally distort its principles, its action, its image, and its credibility. It would be a catastrophe if the UN, or any other organisation for that matter, were to go to war under the banner of humanitarian aid! Peacekeeping is not a humanitarian affair; it is inherently political. But, to look at the issue from a more practical perspective, we need to be aware that if victims are to be fed, so must their persecutors.

There's a kind of 'humanitarian levy' to pay, and all our logic and determination must be put to ensuring that this levy be kept as low as possible. In Somalia, MSF, like the other humanitarian organisations, uses armed guards to protect our convoys and premises – not to protect our people. We call on personnel from existing militias for that. Undoubtedly a step in the wrong direction, it's a constant ethical dilemma. But if we do, it's because the lives of hundreds of thousands of people are hanging by a humanitarian thread and it's not up to us to cut that thread.

Libération: So you call on militias for the sake of efficiency?

Rony Brauman: Yes. But we are more than aware that we are violating one of our principles. These humanitarian militias will have to be demobilised as soon as possible. But may I remind you that, whatever anyone says, the Geneva Conventions represent the bedrock of principles and humanitarian law, and they state that humanitarian aid workers can use small arms for self-defence. Even so, we never do. We prefer to leave that to people who have more cold blood and knowledge of the field to exercise a dissuasive effect that we would be incapable of.

11. CERI: A French research institute, at the time called the Centre d'études et de recherches internationales.

Libération: […] So what remains of humanitarian action? What is its position in those areas where some of its principles may be violated?
Rony Brauman: The question to ask is, does humanitarian action require an exhaustive or limiting definition? My personal definition is limiting: humanitarian action is not intended to provide any kind of political solution.
Pierre Hassner: Concretely: can humanitarian organisations say, "we're calling it a day" because the conditions required for providing access to food and security are no longer guaranteed?
Rony Brauman: Yes. MSF has been behind this kind of initiative. The only weapon we have is calling it a day and making sure everyone knows. That's what we did for example in Ethiopia and Salvadorian refugee camps in Honduras.
Libération: Does that mean that you wouldn't provide humanitarian aid to areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge, for example, or by the Shining Path in Peru?
Rony Brauman: Absolutely. If there's no other way of getting away from the capacity of political powers to manipulate humanitarian action, it's preferable to say no, we wouldn't. […]
Libération: Doesn't the differentiation between politics and humanitarian action that you say is so indispensable condemn the very idea of a state humanitarian policy?
Rony Brauman: […] What is certain is that these two standpoints – political and humanitarian – don't obey the same basic principles. Real lucidity, real discernment are demanded from both sides. Without the intervention of governments, what would we do in Somalia? Nothing. It's so obvious. If food aid, which can only be provided by governments, doesn't reach Somalia, there's nothing we can do.
Libération: That doesn't answer the question: can there be a state humanitarian policy?
Rony Brauman: To put it bluntly, I would say not. A state can have as a policy to support humanitarian actions and give humanitarian organisations the means they need to work under the most efficient, transparent, and positive conditions possible. From there to having a state humanitarian policy, I don't think so and for one simple reason: humanitarian principles can't be shared, whereas state political action is shared on the basis of its own interests. An asymmetrical morality is quite simply hypocrisy. There can be no real state humanitarian policy, but there can be humanitarian action by states. And that's quite different. […]
Libération: Hasn't this weighing up of political power plays resulted in the French Doctors turning into the French strategists?
Rony Brauman: No. But as humanitarian action operates in a hectic political context, there needs to be at least some political reflection. To some extent, it helps keep a sense of perspective. What would we say if Gaddafi decided to send a protection force to Turkish hostels in Germany? Obviously, it would look suspect, and yet, from a purely pragmatic point of view, who could deny that some Turks in the former GDR really do need protection? This example serves to show that the intention underpinning humanitarian action is a way of differentiating morality and politics: in the case of morality, the intention counts just as much as the result, whereas in my opinion, in politics, only the result counts.

'UN Weighs Terms by US for Sending Somalia Force; Europe Cautious', ***The New York Times*** (USA), William E. Schmidt, 28 November 1992 (in English).

Extract:
But officials of international relief agencies based in Europe warned that any large-scale security operation for famine relief would be unsuccessful without the cooperation of

the armed factions that control much of the Somali countryside. Amanda Barnes, a spokesman for Save the Children, a British agency that feeds 30,000 people in Mogadishu, said the idea of flooding Somalia with foreign troops amounted to a "knee-jerk reaction" that could result in more harm than good. "If troops are to be used at all -- and we accept that something needs to be done about security -- it requires extreme sensitivity to the situation on the ground," she said.
Dr. Rony Brauman, President of Doctors Without Borders, a French relief organization, spoke out sharply against military intervention in an interview today in the Paris daily Liberation. "One should not place humanitarian action behind guns, because it loses its meaning," he said.

On 27 November 1992, Jacques de Milliano, MSF Holland General Director, circulated an internal document recommending that MSF should not take a position on the appropriateness of the military intervention, but rather express its concern that it could lead to a worsening in the security situation.

'**MSF Internal Position Paper** on Military Intervention in Somalia', Jacques de Milliano, MSF Holland General Director, 27 November 1992 (in English) [edited].

Extract:
The overnight US announcement to be in favour of sending troops to Somalia and their willingness to contribute 30,000 'boys' to this military intervention puts once again the MSF position concerning this issue on the agenda. In the light of the human tragedy going on in Somalia, we have to take into account the following arguments.
The first thing to deal with is if we can have a firm position on a military intervention, being a humanitarian organisation taking into account the longer term 'humanitarian cause'. Defending humanitarian principles is part of our mission. Are we – if we would take a favourable position – not creating a precedent, a monster, in humanitarian practice: a monster out of control? There are some arguments for this. On the other hand, if violence and madness have become the standard, maybe extraordinary measures for a military intervention should not be excluded. The weight of the arguments differs for the moment between the MSF sections. But, we are all extremely worried. We do not have, at the moment, a consensus on approving or condemning the military action, based on these considerations.
Secondly, there are the immediate military and political considerations. Will the deployment of those forces be fast and in sufficient number to control the whole country and will they stay long enough to stop violence? Also, will this military action be accompanied by sufficient political action – which until now has not been the case – to reach pacification and to restore in the end civil administration? There are reasons to have serious doubts; at the other hand there is the benefit of the doubt because apparently no realistic alternative is available. Here also, we are not in a position for the moment, to have a firm common position. But again we are all extremely worried, without approving or condemning the military action.
Thirdly, the security situation of the teams in the field should be taken into account, in the short run. There is a consensus that a 'high profile' positive position on military intervention by MSF would, in this emotional context, definitely increase the insecurity. This argument urges us to refrain from taking a public position in favour of a military action.

The conclusion of all this is that, while the internal debate is ongoing, MSF takes NO POSITION ON THE APPROPRIATENESS OF MILITARY INTERVENTION. We only will express our legitimate worries – see above – as a humanitarian organisation and our analysis that, if military intervention takes place now, it could probably have been prevented by more diplomatic efforts in the past. In principle, negotiations should be the instrument to resolve conflicts.

It is very difficult when you are in the middle of something that horrible. When you are seeing hundreds of people dying and you also are witness to the Somalia factions not taking care of anything about what happened to the civilian population. Everything that they did was for their own benefit. A lot of food was stolen. So something had to happen. We couldn't stop the violence. I think I was too naïve but I thought, 'what else could you do?' And later on, when we saw the nasty evolution of the military intervention, everybody, myself included, realised that this was not the solution either. At least it had to be tried. Basically, the Somalis were stronger than the American Army.

Jules Pieters, MSF Holland, Emergency Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

The directors of MSF France decided not to take a position on the intervention. However, the coordinators in the field proposed to communicate on a range of precautions that needed to be taken to ensure the intervention stayed on track. A letter to the Security Council was therefore drafted addressing these issues and was circulated among the directors of the different sections. It reiterated, among other things, that priority must be given to finding a political solution requiring reinstituting dialogue between the different factions.
On 1 December 1992, the MSF France management team announced that the letter to the Security Council was shelved, as they considered it difficult to express a non-position on the intervention. Apparently, it was preferable to remain silent.
During the meeting of the Board on 4 December, some directors said they regretted that MSF did not take a position on the intervention.

'MSF **Draft Open Letter** to the UN Security Council', 30 November 1992 (in English).

Extract:
You are about to vote on whether or not to send troops into Somalia. With missions on site in Somalia, the MSF sections would like to share with you their opinion on this decision.
Reminder
The United Nations agencies, the NGOs and the International Committee of the Red Cross are trying to cover the needs of the 650,000 displaced persons in the South and central regions of Somalia. The present aid operations aim at meeting the nutritional and medical needs of these people through the following programmes:
• general food distribution in the form of dry rations or through kitchens.
• supplementary food for the undernourished.
• medical programmes: vaccination, dispensaries.

• supply of drinking water.
• training personnel.
• veterinary programmes.
In an effort to decongest urban centres (as in the town of Baidoa), programmes have moved away from these centres towards rural areas. The distribution of dry rations and seed contribute to programmes of returning to the land. This policy has encouraged a not inconsiderable return of displaced persons. But they remain very dependent on international aid.
Warning
Should armed intervention be voted [on], the following points should, in our opinion, be taken into consideration:
• Insecurity is not only due to bands that can be controlled by force. It is also due to the existence of clan conflict and power struggles. The fact that local and traditional authorities, who continue to exist despite the obvious difficulties, are overwhelmed is mostly due to the fact that economic activity is summed up in international aid that is coveted by all the various parties. There is no way that military intervention alone will resolve these problems.
• Armed intervention will necessarily be focused on the urban areas, which will further isolate the rural population. Forced into these same rural zones, looters will constitute a major threat to rural populations that international aid will no longer be able to reach.
• A political solution is an indispensable priority for helping the country resolve the crisis it is going through. Not everything has been tried from this point of view! Military intervention that is limited to a police action and not accompanied by the determination to re-initiate the dialogue between the factions will only further reduce the chances of finding a political solution.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 1 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia – no official MSF position for or against the UN decision on military intervention. But the NGO has made a series of recommendations to the UN and the participating countries. An influx of journalists is to be expected in Mogadishu. Quite a few calls already. See if we can cope with the journalists (contact Michel Clerc and look at the possibility of a communications officer based in Mogadishu to help out).

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Team, MSF France, 2 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Brigitte [Vasset, Director of Operations]: 2) Somalia: shelving of the letter that was to be sent to B. Boutros-Ghali, as it was difficult to express a 'non-position' on the intervention.
Rony [Brauman, President of the board opf directors]: We have proposed to Reporters Sans Frontières that they conduct an exploratory mission on setting up a radio station in Mogadishu to counter rumours and misleading information.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 4 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Mission focus: Somalia

Brigitte Vasset [Director of Operations]: The UN announced its 100-day plan in a context of general deterioration and insecurity, heightened by the resignation of Boutros Boutros-Ghali's special representative, breaking off negotiations underway between the various Somali parties. The lack of certitude regarding the American troops' landing points has exacerbated the insecurity further still. So it has been decided to reduce to skeleton teams. One team has also been relocated, as its position at a strategic crossroads for the assembling of armed groups could prove dangerous.

MSF's attitude to the arrival of American troops was analysed by Rony Brauman: if no official position has been adopted, it means that despite its name, this intervention is largely political, in contradiction to MSF's wish to disassociate humanitarian issues from political ones. We should highlight the most important points and draw attention to the negative repercussions such an operation could have:

• The warm welcome for the American troops extended by the Somali population and different Somali parties could dissipate hopes for a breakthrough in the resolution of this situation.

• This operation nonetheless raises questions on the efforts made by NGOs these last few months to open up the main distribution centres, which are sources of serious public health problems and insecurity.

• The lack of precision on the intervention's mandate and mission, mainly with regard to the disarming issue, is a problem.

• We absolutely must pull together so as to ensure that the confusion regarding military-humanitarianism does not take root and political negotiations do not fall by the wayside.

Patrick Vial [Coordinator in Somalia], recently returned from the field, was astonished that MSF had not adopted a firm position on the failure of nation states and the UN to assume their responsibilities with regard to the Somali problem, which has led to this military intervention. Marcel Roux [Vice President of Board of Directors] observed that in Somalia, humanitarian aid has reached its limits and assistance has ground to a halt. In a context such as this, we have to recognise the need to call on other options, including a UN military intervention. Serge Stefanaggi [General Secretary of Board of Directors] considers that MSF's non-adoption of a position is hypocritical.

Michel Fiszbin [Director of Communications] pointed out the different opinions on this point within MSF France – and noted that, despite all the discussions that have been held, headquarters was not ready to adopt a clear position on the military-humanitarian issue, even though it had managed to for Bosnia. Catherine Damesin [Director of Finance] did not understand why, after all the efforts made by MSF to bring the Somalia problem to the public's attention, there is no official declaration being made.

Marc Gastellu[-Etchegorry, Deputy Director of Operations] was not convinced of the long-term effectiveness of such an intervention and drew attention to the fact that it was largely motivated by the UN's statement on the diversion of 80 per cent of food aid, which is a hard percentage to prove, but did trigger an emotional reaction. He considers that an MSF position would bear no influence whatsoever, and it would be more effective to focus on the negative repercussions.

Brigitte Vasset went further still, stating that it is not MSF's role to systematically adopt positions in all situations.

Rony Brauman [President of MSF France Board of Directors] pointed out that this is not the first time in its history that humanitarian assistance has been confronted with its

limits. He agreed that MSF can sometimes remain silent. Jean-Jacques Gabas asked a pragmatic question about the possibility of this intervention helping distributions; i.e. whether Somalia's people would get to eat or not. Xavier Jardon [Treasurer] observed that generally speaking, this intervention did respond to MSF's calls for democratic nations' intervention with United Nations backup.
[General Director] Bernard Pécoul's conclusions focused on the necessity to reflect on the failure of MSF's calls on nation states during the previous six months. He considered that MSF still has a role to play in the field and positions to adopt in the future as the situation evolves.
Patrick Vial talked about the field again: to his knowledge, MSF was the only NGO to have reduced its teams. He feared that headquarters is being too fearful, and called for field teams to be more involved when such decisions are being taken. He has seen for himself the reduced latitude of action since Somalia has been in the press.
Marc Gastellu[-Etchegorry] concluded the debate by pointing out that any official position should express the hope that the Somali intervention succeeds. A vote was proposed on MSF's adoption of a position on the in-depth issues underlying the American troops' intervention in Somalia: 2 votes for, 7 against, 2 abstentions. A press release will state MSF's cooperation with the American troops and an analysis of the possible negative effects.

'MSF France in Somalia – January 1991-May 1993 – Mission Evaluation – Final **Report**', Virginie Raisson and Dr Serge Manoncourt, 4 February 1994 (in English from French original, translation by Richard Swanson and Eric Bullington).

Extract:
At the regional coordination meeting in Addis Ababa at the very beginning of December, the representatives of the different sections on the ground in Somalia and Kenya reached a consensus based on a reasoned document of "warning". However, after the process of going around the table referred to above, and in light of the discrepancies among the various European headquarters – as well as from a wish to be consistent – Paris decided not release the document, nor even to question the United Nations with respect to their mandate, strategy, and system. Yet, MSF had a legitimate right to do so, just as the other humanitarian actors did, because it had not been informed on these questions. The circumstances and individual reactions created not only confusion, but also frustration for the teams, who felt betrayed [sic] by headquarters.

There was a series of problems at different levels. There was the problem, almost a psychological one, of finding ourselves pulling totally against the tide if we positioned ourselves against, because everyone wanted this intervention and supported the idea that a semblance of order could be brought about through a nicely run intervention. The scenes over there were so awful. There'd been nothing like it before. In the follow-up to the Gulf war, which was above board, for sure, but nonetheless stank of oil, protection of American interests, Kuwaiti lies, etc, this intervention seemed so pure in humanitarian terms, so humanely pure.
Yet, even then I had doubts that things would be as simple as they seemed. I knew full well that Bush had lost the elections and he'd passed this poisoned chalice to Clinton. I knew full well that Somalia was an area of primary strategic importance and that all this pious spiel was just window dressing… Nonetheless, I couldn't state with my hand on my heart that it would all go so wrong. In reality, my biggest concern was that Mogadishu welcomed this inter-

vention. Your average man in the streets of Mogadishu was waiting eagerly for the Americans to arrive. He couldn't hack the bastards of Aidid or Ali Mahdi anymore and he hoped that the Americans would get rid of them – just as the Iraqis thought the Americans would rid them of Saddam Hussein in 2003.
I was really uneasy. I had my doubts, my convictions, but I was also aware of the fact that this intervention could maybe render a real service to the Somalis. And when all is said and done, it's this service to Somalis, and not the match between the service and ideals, that counts. The Board debate reflected this attitude. And we didn't take sides, we held back our criticisms or support. I would call our position one of 'wait and see'. We were divided. But we couldn't condemn hope and the future. And furthermore, we were sceptical. But being sceptical is not enough to give us leverage. So we decided to judge on performance, and we would work with this reality.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

The discussions on what position to adopt on the military intervention were very heated. We'd called for action again and again. And suddenly, one party said, 'We're on our way,' and we had no idea how to react! A military-humanitarian showdown had already started during the Kurd crisis the year before. We didn't really know what to say, when they decided to set up a security zone in Iraqi territory on the Turkish border. We didn't pronounce ourselves for or against. In the end, there were soldiers everywhere but we still managed to do our work. For Somalia, we decided not to adopt any position but wait and see, telling ourselves, 'If we have issues with the way things roll out, then we'll strike.' We just listed the conditions to meet 'if an intervention has to take place'. But Rony let rip against the intervention, nonetheless.

Dr Brigitte Vasset, MSF France, Director of Operations, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

I think that at the time, we tried to make a lot of waves about the famine and when the operation started, some people were quite relieved. I don't think that we called for this intervention, but we weren't against it. There was a moment when we thought the UN's diplomatic involvement in the negotiations had made progress and it was perhaps a shame to introduce a second, more heavyweight force alongside it. But these decisions are out of our hands. I think we wanted the international community to get involved. At the time, MSF was calling on the United States and the international community to assume their responsibilities. In Kurdistan, for example, we didn't question the military forces deployed for one minute. We more or less called on the international community to 'assume its responsibilities'. This was our stock phrase and slogan at the time. But we didn't really know what we meant by it.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor from 1991, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 28 November 1992, General Aidid, while still calling the UN operation a failure, declared his acceptance of a possible dispatch of 30,000 UN soldiers to Somalia to protect the distribution of food aid.
On 3 December, during a conference on humanitarian aid in Somalia, the Ethiopian President, Meles Zenawi, called on the international community "to uphold the Somali people's pride". During this same meeting, the US Special Envoy for Somalia, Robert Oakley, stated that the efforts of humanitarian workers had not succeeded and insisted on the necessity of a military intervention.

'The General Aidid Accepts the Dispatch of 30,000 American Soldiers to Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 28 November 1992 (in French).

Extract:
"The initiative announced by the American government, if implemented in conjunction with the political platform adopted by the Somali National Alliance (SNA) last August, could help Somalia back onto its feet," stated a press release received from the SNA in Nairobi, quoting General Aidid. "So we welcome the American initiative which, if we have fully understood, has the support of both American administrations – outgoing and incoming – and the two chambers in Congress, as well as EEC approval," concluded General Aidid, according to the SNA's press release. [...]
In a second press release, issued with the first, General Aidid did not hold back on his criticisms of the United Nations operations in Somalia, which were, according to him, a failure.

'The Ethiopian President Calls on the International Community to "Avoid Wounding the Pride of the Somali People"', **AFP** (France), Addis Ababa, 3 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
While everything is pointing to an imminent international military intervention in Somalia, on Thursday the President of neighbouring Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, made a call from Addis Ababa urging the international community to "avoid wounding the pride of the Somali people in the settlement of the civil war in Somalia". [...] President Meles Zenawi added, "A humanitarian intervention must serve to help the Somali people and so be built upon an understanding of this people."
Ethiopia shares a long, permeable border with Somalia and its large population. Over the past year, it has been crossed by several hundred thousand refugees fleeing the famine. Pointing to Somalia's "advanced stage of disintegration", the Ethiopian president recognised that a "minimum of security is critical" to ensure the success of humanitarian assistance.
The American Ambassador Robert Oakley, President George Bush's Special Envoy, issued a warning to the Somali clans, "If they do not take the tragedy unfurling in their country into account, they will be responsible for the aftermath." Mr Oakley considers that "despite the millions of dollars of aid and the millions of tonnes of food channelled to Somalia, humanitarian workers' efforts have not met with success," and insisted on the necessity of an intervention in Somalia.

On the evening of 3 December 1992, Resolution 794 received a unanimous vote of approval from the UN Security Council. It authorised the rollout of a military operation in Somalia under the United States' command so as to "establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations". The operation, blessed with the name 'Restore Hope', was to be implemented by a multinational military operational force, UNITAF, made up largely of Americans. Its mandate was vague, but the United Nations' secretary general declared that it would enforce the United Nations' "new role" in the world.

'The Main Thrust of Resolution 794 on Somalia', **AFP** (France), New York (United Nations), 4 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:

Here is the main thrust of the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 794, which authorises the initiation of a military operation with a humanitarian goal in Somalia under the leadership of the United States.

The force's mandate:

- Taking action by virtue of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council authorises the secretary general of the United Nations and member states to "to employ all necessary means to establish a secure environment, as soon as possible, for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia".
- The Council authorises the secretary general and member states concerned to "take the necessary steps to secure unified leadership and guidance of the various forces".

The UN's role:

- It is the Security Council that will decide when the operation ends, with the secretary general's guidance. Mr Boutros-Ghali must inform the Council by 18 December at the latest, and on a regular basis thereafter, of how operations are proceeding.
- The secretary general and his Somalia representative must "continue their efforts to secure a political settlement".

The Council will appoint an "ad hoc" commission composed of several of its members, charged with keeping it informed of the resolution's application.

- A "small liaison group" from the UN will be assigned to the multinational operation's headquarters, placed under American command.

Funding:

It will not cost the UN anything. All member states "with the wherewithal" are called upon to "supply military forces" and "provide additional contributions, financially or in kind". The UN funds exist for this purpose.

A call on the parties involved:

- The Council calls on all parties, movements, and factions in Somalia to "bring their hostilities to an immediate end" and facilitate the UN and assistance agencies' efforts "so as to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to those in need in Somalia".

Humanitarian law:

Those who violate or order violations of international humanitarian law in Somalia will be held individually responsible.

'The UN Provides a Legal Framework for an Operation Sought by the United States', **AFP** (France), René Slama, New York (United Nations), 4 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
According to the UN's Secretary General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Resolution 794, adopted unanimously last Thursday evening by the Security Council, will reinforce the United Nation's "new role" in the world. It is, it seems, "historical" because "for the first time, an intervention is being initiated for a humanitarian cause," he added.
Under the pressure of non-aligned countries, the United States finally made a series of concessions on the organisational front by accepting control and coordination mechanisms between the multinational forces under American command and the UN. [...] Between the urgency of the Somali situation and the effect the White House's announcement has had, things have moved swiftly over the past week in New York.
The secretary general of the UN, whose operation in Somalia is fast losing credibility due to the anarchy on the ground, seized the outgoing President George Bush's offer of an operation aiming to save the maximum number of lives in a country taken hostage by factions and armed gangs. "Other than the Americans, who else is capable of mounting such an operation so swiftly?" an Arab diplomat voiced aloud.
Nevertheless, no one can say how things will turn out once the Marines land in Somalia. 1,800 men, aboard three amphibious ships, await orders off the coast of Mogadishu. The United Nation's mandate remains vague because it amounts to establishing "a secure environment" for humanitarian relief operations. A total of nearly 30,000 American soldiers could participate in the operation, which largely outstrips all the other contingents officially offered by other countries.
The White House confirmed that the United States counted on completing its mission before the handover of office between Mr Bush and the president-elect, Bill Clinton, on 20 January. Resolution 794 is "a welcome and historic step in coming to the aid of the Somali people," said Mr Clinton, in "congratulating President Bush".

On 4 December 1992, Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium's Communications Director, declared to the Belgian press that this intervention had become necessary, but that it posed security risks for members of humanitarian organisations.
On 11 December, MSF Belgium sent a letter to the Belgian minister of Foreign Affairs, the Belgian representative at the United Nations, and the Belgian ambassador in Nairobi, asking for information on the operational aims of 'Restore Hope' so it could orientate its programmes accordingly. The organisation drew attention to the fact that its teams were based in Somali towns with a history of serious security incidents. In interviews given in the field, the MSF Belgium coordinator voiced concerns about the risk of image confusion between the MSF Belgium team in Kismayo and the contingent of Belgian soldiers due to arrive.
On 3 January, in an editorial published in the Belgian daily, *Le Soir*, Réginald Moreels, President of MSF Belgium, who recently returned from a surgical mission in Kismayo, set out criteria for when "a humanitarian worker could call for a military intervention, once all diplomatic channels had been exhausted".
On 7 January, following a new visit to Somalia as a 'special emissary' for MSF Belgium, the former Belgian Prime Minister, Wilfried Martens, declared to *Le Soir* that the paramilitary groups needed disarming and a dialogue instigating with the Somali faction chiefs.

'Pierre Harzé (MSF): "This Intervention has become a Necessity"', ***Le Journal et Indépendance – Le Peuple*** (Belgium), 4 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Pierre Harzé does not underestimate this fact: "We have to weigh up the risks this intervention poses for members of humanitarian organisations in the field." Nonetheless, Pierre Harzé recognises that it is the only way forward, given the situation in Somalia: "MSF supports this intervention, such as it has been presented, as total chaos reigns." Still expanding on the inherent risks involved in this type of intervention, Mr Harzé specified that MSF people were not light-hearted about what lies ahead: "We have decided to assume the risks [...] MSF is resigned to this type of intervention."
Nonetheless, Pierre Harzé could not resist expressing some regrets, given this latest development: "We haven't tried everything on the diplomatic front yet. Diplomatic efforts in the field are glaringly absent [...] We regret the toppling of the UN representative over there." For Dr Harzé, this operation should neither overshadow the population's needs nor hold back the development of a political solution: "This operation must be conducted in parallel with serious political and administrative activity. As things stand, there is no medium-term solution in sight. As for the military operation itself, we need to stay very cautious, the power is in the streets in this country."

Letter from Dr Georges Dallemagne, MSF Belgium Director of Operations, and Dr Jean-Pierre Luxen, General Director of MSF Belgium, to the Belgium Representative at the United Nations, the Belgium Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Belgium Ambassador in Nairobi, copies to ICRC, UNICEF and UNHCR, 11 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Your Excellency, Dear Minister, Dear Ambassador,
Following the United Nations Security Council's decision to launch Operation 'Restore Hope' in Somalia, Médecins Sans Frontières is astonished by its inability to obtain information on the consequences of this operation with regard to the protection of our teams in the field and the coordination of humanitarian operations. Médecins Sans Frontières has been working in Somalia since these events began in early January 1991. Medical and nutritional teams are working in most Somali towns and the refugee camps in neighbouring countries (Kenya, Yemen, Ethiopia). Our teams are prepared to continue working as long as the emergency situation so demands.
As a consequence, we do need to know the intentions of those in charge of 'Restore Hope'; which regions in Somalia will the operations roll out in? On what timeline? Will medical and food aid be provided? In what form? How long will it last? Will it be coordinated with the NGOs on the ground? Meanwhile, some serious incidents have occurred in the Somali towns of Kismayo, Baidoa, Merca, and Bardhere since the Security Council took its decision. Others have taken place in El Wak and Mandera in North Kenya. These incidents have left MSF with no choice but to reduce its teams.
We hope to receive the details we require without delay so we can adapt our programmes in the best interest of the Somali people.

'Humanitarian and Military', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Réginald Moreels, President of Board of Directors, MSF Belgium, Brussels, 3 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
At first, political and military chaos. This intervention in Somalia is a new and exceptional situation in international legal terms, and does not even amount to an affront to national sovereignty as there are no states involved. A complete compartmentalisation of power and territory – two key elements of any state – stifling the existence of legitimate representatives of the people and the international community. In these circumstances, official diplomacy must also play its role, but if it takes too long, we cannot leave a population to be disseminated without intervening by force.
The second criterion is linked to the diversion of aid. In Somalia, the most optimistic assessments rate diversion at 60 per cent. Some of the rice, flour and wheat is exported to 'friendly' countries. The third criterion is the level of security for aid workers and victims. What is assistance worth without protection? This leaves the humanitarian mandate half paralysed, which leaves only the intervening parties' mandates, which should have been better defined before the operation. Because among "all the means necessary to channel humanitarian aid", active disarming should top the list.
These criteria, which our humanitarian duty requires us to define in order to both avoid abuse and extract the positive sides, should be applied universally, so that the 'humanitarian intervention' that has existed for over 150 years acquires legitimacy. When I was on a surgical mission in Kismayo just a few days ago, my colleagues and I saw with our own eyes, along with a jubilant population, the arrival of Belgian and American paratroopers. In the midst of this overwhelming event, we theorise less and put ourselves in the place of those repressed by the local ruling clan, who now see a hope of emerging from the dark, and restarting a wisp of a bearable life.

'Martens: Pursue the Effort', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Véronique Kiesel, Brussels, 7 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
In his role as special emissary for MSF Belgium, Wilfried Martens completed a visit to Africa yesterday. He's been on the move since 26 December, visiting Kismayo in Somalia, the refugee camps in Kenya, and the corridors of a preparatory meeting for reconciliation held in Addis Ababa. Once he'd met as many Belgian soldiers and NGO representatives as Mr Boutros-Ghali, the former prime minister was able to form a much wider vision of the Somali drama, and above all, the solutions required to bring it to a close: "The UN initiative of sending in troops charged with bringing the violence to an end is an incontestable sign of hope, but to achieve this goal, a global approach is required. To bring the fighting to a halt, the paramilitary groups must be disarmed. This subject has led to differing points of view between the Americans and the UN's secretary general (the latter has the Belgian leaders' support). I think that this disarming is needed: it's up to the UN Security Council to decide on a coercive mandate.
"Meanwhile, halting the fighting will not secure the country's peace. The dialogue started by the Somali faction chiefs is heading in the right direction, but I do not think we will rebuild Somalia without associating the traditional chiefs and the religious and intellectual authorities with the future reconciliation conference. Finally, this country will need international aid to get back onto its economic knees. So we must not let public – and so western governments' – interest drop."

We had the impression that we were putting our teams at risk. Given this context, we weren't dead set against the intervention. We were aware of its limits, and the fact that it was arriving too late. Nobody imagined that it would go so badly wrong, but we did have doubts about whether it could lead to solutions. We saw more of a logistics interest: how can we ensure convoys get through to deliver help? It's really one of the first debates in which we tried to define ourselves and consider our positioning with regard to the military, what rationale we should adopt for convoys, etc. There were many differences of opinion. I think that Réginald leaned in favour of military protection, for example. He had less of an issue with this than others. He said, 'These are professionals, they know what they're doing.' But we have to remember that apart from a few positions like Réginald's, generally speaking the Belgian section has always adopted a pragmatic approach with regard to speaking out. There's never been any dogma. There's always been an alignment of what's being said with the hard, pragmatic reality of the field, plus a little political touch at times. In Somalia, there were no in-depth reflections going on behind the scenes on the relationship between the military and humanitarian assistance. Even Réginald wasn't thinking about this. The reflections were limited to whether or not we needed someone to protect the convoy, because otherwise they wouldn't get through and so what was the point?

As for the Belgian nationality of the Blue Helmets deployed in Kismayo, we certainly didn't speak out about this in public because MSF Belgium was very divided on the matter. I was against and Réginald Moreels was for. He thought that things were following a natural course. Some people had a favourable outlook on this conjunction, a kind of, 'we're amongst our own and we're all beer drinkers.' There was also the feeling that the military could help out on the logistics front – something we should not underestimate. But not everyone agreed.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

We were opposed to the arrival of Belgian troops in Kismayo because we feared confusion between MSF Belgium and the Belgian army. We feared that it would have negative consequences on our neutrality. The message was, 'We're opposed to the Belgian intervention in Kismayo because of the risk of confusion between humanitarian workers and troops arising from their shared nationality. This will create confusion between mandates, work impediments, security problems.' I think there was a press release and debates on the telly. Contacts were taken up with the government and the United Nations. All this happened in Brussels. I remember that at one point in time, when the Belgians and Americans had already arrived, there were a lot of journalists around and I was interviewed by a Flemish public television channel. I was really harsh about the military operation, mainly because of this risk of confusion. I later learnt that the interview was broadcast live and there were military figures, politicians and MSF Belgium's director in the studio in Brussels. The latter said 'But we need to take what the head of mission says with a pinch of salt... It's not that bad.'

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

In the days following the multinational operation's announcement, a new wave of journalists descended on Mogadishu, leading to yet another price hike in a town stripped bare of all basic services.

'Journalists in their Hundreds', **AFP** (France), François-Xavier Harispe, Mogadishu, 6 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
While the capital's inhabitants await the troops, they're getting an eye-full of journalists [...] As forerunner to the wave of hoped-for military contingents, monopolised by American soldiers, journalists are rolling into Mogadishu in their hundreds. "They're worse than a swarm of locusts, they're razing everything to the ground," complained a member of a humanitarian organisation, appalled by the journalists' readiness to pay quadruple recent prices for villas, vehicles, and escorts.
They've come, they're all here [...] Such and such an American television channel already has 65 people here, while its competitor only 59. Veterans of the Gulf [War], survivors of ex-Yugoslavia, let the show begin. CNN already has five filming teams and Dan Rather of CBS is expected any day, along with Patrick Poivre d'Arvor for TF1.
Villas rented for US$15,000 a month, compared to US$2,000 three days ago. US$60 a day on Friday to US$200 on Saturday for a car with the journalists' mandatory armed guard. One channel hired a Hercules C-130, usually reserved for transporting troops, because it had such volumes of people and equipment to bring in.
In Mogadishu, there's nothing left. There's no electricity, which means people need their own generators, no drinks (the British brought in some beer, Americans mineral water), no means of communication, which explains the satellite dishes sprouting up on all the town centre's roofs. A huge banner in red letters on a white background for an American press agency (easily taken for the Red Cross pennant), stickers on the windshields for the others: the media circus is in town. Some people even say that it's only when the press is installed, notably the American channels, that the military operation will begin.

A. WAITING FOR THE US SAVIOURS

Some political figures, such as the French minister of foreign affairs, seemed optimistic about what they saw as a 'shock treatment' of short duration only. Yet the United States' ambassador in Nairobi expressed serious reservations about the operation's success. Predicting the troops' engulfment in the Somali quagmire, as was the case in Lebanon in 1983, he declared: "If you liked Beirut, you're going to love Mogadishu."
Meanwhile, the armed groups that terrorised Mogadishu headed out of the capital, pulling back to Baidoa, among other places, where they multiplied attacks against the handful of humanitarian organisations who hadn't evacuated their teams, and looted their food stocks.

'The "Maquisards" Leave Mogadishu, but Take to Looting Elsewhere', **AFP** (France), 6 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Many young people, heavily armed and fresh from terrorising the population of Mogadishu for weeks, left the capital on Sunday, before the multinational forces under American command have sent in so much as an advance guard. For the first time in three weeks, a convoy of trucks transporting food could leave the port on Sunday. International aid has been blocked there by gangsters under various war lords' command, who are now multiplying the attacks on stocks set up by charities outside the capital. In nearly 20

countries, several tens of thousands of soldiers are completing their preparations for their landing – likely to start on Monday – on different parts of Somali soil. The first to arrive should be Marines (American), swiftly followed by French soldiers and Djibouti legionnaires. [...]
The departure of many young fighters from Mogadishu increases the likelihood of a Pacific landing, but officers are already concerned for the welfare of charitable organisations' international staff, scattered around Somalia, and the risks taken by the soldiers if the operation drags on. Twenty-five of the 80 members of humanitarian organisations working in Baidoa (200 km northwest of Mogadishu) have left the city, now crawling with armed men who looted several organisations' warehouses on Saturday and stole US$20,000 from a member of the humanitarian organisation, CARE.
Meanwhile, the American Ambassador in Nairobi, Mr Smith Hempstone, cautioned his government about the risks entailed in Operation 'Restore Hope': "If you liked Beirut, you're going to love Mogadishu," he said, referring to the previous American intervention in Lebanon, which cost the lives of 241 American soldiers in October 1983. Cited by the magazine *US News & World Report*, Mr Hempstone, a personal friend of President Bush, declared himself "astounded, distraught, and alarmed by the demonic haste with which the American government apparently wants to throw itself in to the Somali quagmire."
"Somalis are as tough as their country, and almost as merciless", said the diplomat. "The Somalis are born warriors. They'll set up ambushes. They'll launch surprise attacks. They won't stop the convoys getting through, but they'll leave victims."
"The situation will be calm for a day or two, then a Somali kid will throw a grenade in a café full of American soldiers. There'll be a kidnapping or two. At some point, a hidden sniper will take down one of our watchmen," he added. "Some people think, and I don't think they're far wrong, that it will take five years to get Somalia back onto its knees, let alone its feet," concluded Mr Hempstone, who nonetheless admits he does not have a better idea to offer than the international landing.

In Baidoa, MSF Holland's international staff was reduced to three people – the coordinator, the administrator, and a doctor, who continued treating patients under the protection of the mission's 150 armed guards.
On 7 December 1992, MSF Holland issued a press release criticising the tardy arrival of the troops promised for Somalia. In the field, the team was singled out for news reports and interviews. These communications were disseminated on a massive scale, particularly in the Netherlands, where they generated a flood of donations to MSF Holland, and of journalists' calls for interviews with the field team.
Diplomatic leverage was used in Canada and the United Stated to call for the rapid deployment of the troops promised for Baidoa. On 8 December, two United States fighter planes flew over Baidoa, accentuating the tensions within the armed groups.

Fax from MSF Holland Team in Baidoa to Amsterdam Desk, 7 December 1992, 6:43 am (in English).

Extract:
Dear Jules,
We had a calm night.

Already you knew that there was a problem within SDM. That problem was discussed last night with the elders, the problem was not solved, even they did not want to solve the problem, so according to our source (Lesto), [there] will be a fight between 21 clans in Baidoa region and Baidoa city today.
While writing this, some shooting started already, also household staff very nervous. We stay inside the compound for the moment. Our security staff is very reliable, don't worry. This is it for the moment, keep you informed.
Cheerio,
Wouter [van Empelen]

Message from MSF Holland Team in Baidoa to Amsterdam Desk, 7 December 1992, 9:28 am (in English).

Extract:
Dear Jules,
According to sources (we cannot hear it from here) there is 'big fighting' going on in Baidoa. In front of OPD 1 there were 6 casualties this morning, the OPD is closed for the moment, also OPD 2 is still closed. All other OPD's are still open.
Again the security staff assured us this morning (on the holy book) that we cannot be looted and that we cannot be killed etc. etc. We are very calm, I think under the circumstances we are doing [alright], we have good confidence in each other and we cope however, the situation is a little bizarre.
Please don't worry too much. If you phone the state department, give them orders to go ahead, Jules.
Ma salaam aleikum,
Wouter

'Looting in Baidoa – the Slow Pace of Preparations for the Somali Intervention Increases the Risks', **Press Release**, MSF Holland, 7 December 1992 (in Dutch).

Extract:
Since the United Nations announced its intervention in Somalia, armed groups are attempting a last stand. This is what members of Médecins Sans Frontières have observed. The organisation has had to call on armed guards to protect its team and equipment in the town of Baidoa. Médecins Sans Frontières took this step on Saturday, when another relief organisation was looted. Others were looted yesterday. MSF and others have already reduced their teams in anticipation of future troubles.
According to Wouter van Empelen, the MSF Coordinator in Baidoa, the security of the Somali people and humanitarian organisations is more at threat than ever due to the late arrival of the announced [military] intervention. As the days go by, between the intervention's announcement and its rollout, the number of dead and wounded could rise and relief work could be seriously compromised.

Fax from Jules Pieters, MSF Holland Programme Manager to H. Roy Williams, International Rescue Committee, 7 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Dear Roy,
The situation in Baidoa is deteriorating quickly. As you may know the CARE (expat) compound has been looted, armed bandits tried to loot the compounds of CONCERN and World Vision (Australia). MSF and all the other NGOs have hired extra technicals and armed guards to protect people and goods.
Today, I received info from our team that an internal conflict within SDM has led to active fighting in Baidoa town. MSF Holland has issued a press statement today, in which we express our grave concern about the situation in Baidoa. We feel that too much time is lost between the actual announcement of Restore Hope and the start of the operation. In other words, lives of expats are in danger now, humanitarian assistance is to say the least, delayed.
Could you inform Washington about the current situation in Baidoa and express MSF Holland's concern? I will contact you today, at the same time I will try to contact Andrew Natsios' office.
Best regards,
Jules Pieters

Fax from MSF Holland Team in Baidoa to Amsterdam Desk, 8 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
I will try to paint a picture of what happened last night. About 10 pm in the night news reached [our team] that non-affiliated gangsters were looting World Vision. Just hours [later] they looted ICRC, where they supposedly took everything including the communication equipment. These events, the heavy fighting in town, and the rumour that next they would come to our compound, put our guards on full alert. Meaning that besides the already incredible manpower and hardware in our compound, they brought in rocket-launchers.
Meanwhile we took some precautionary measures; we hid basic medical supplies in several places, as well as a portable Codan radio. A few minutes after we heard big shooting near to our compound; we went into the room where we sleep with the three of us (in this room our emergency evacuation materials are stored as well) and sat behind the wall for a while. The shooting continued (sporadic antiaircraft fire, rocket fire, and gunshots).
Within ten minutes, we were told by security-personnel that things were safe again; naturally we were a little bit suspicious of this statement. Cautiously we went to take a look. It appeared that the following measures were taken by our own security-personnel: all our guards from the household compound and the warehouse compound were positioned in front of our house and the warehouse. In addition to that, a befriended clan came to our assistance. Lesto [an elder] and the owner of our house had taken their measures as well.
Practically it meant that our house was encircled by approx. 200 men; two impressive technicals were positioned at both corners of our house and still the mad-Max of our friendly neighbour was strategically situated at the other side of the road.
Still some random shooting was to be heard, but in view of the measures being taken we felt very safe but we remained very cautious. After a pep-talk with our staff (they were

actually pep-talking us instead of the other way around) in which they assured us nothing would happen to us and that they would all die in case somebody would try to hurt us, we went into our room again and had a nice sleep – convinced the Americans would be there in the morning. Anyway, the whole thing was very impressive. On the one hand it was something we all hope we won't have to go through something like this anymore, but, on the other hand, the show of loyalty from local, staff and other non-staff members towards MSF and us individually made an impression on us we will not forget. It showed us that in situations like this, we can totally rely on them and we are all convinced that without them we would have been in a lot of trouble.
As the Americans are not in Baidoa yet, which to say the least, is somewhat disappointing, we will be very cautious today. Yesterday James [Orbinski, Medical Coordinator] talked to Matt Bryden [Special Advisor to the Canadian Ambassador on Somali Affairs], informed him about the situation, and asked him to request the Americans to at least show their force by flying over Baidoa regularly with either jets or helicopters. In addition to that, a friend of MSF-Canada in the prime minister's office is going to brief the Canadian prime minister about Somalia today, requesting him to pressure all the way up to Washington. So, inch allah, things will work out.

Fax from MSF Holland Team in Baidoa to Amsterdam Communication Officer, 8 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Dear Ina,
Thanks for your fax and the attention you channelled to our mission. I think by now Holland must have a clear idea what the work of MSF is in Somalia. Because of this, I [would] like to propose that as from today on we select the channels not to pollute the quality of our standard. Therefore, I propose that we continue with the NOS Journaal[12] when they are interested and put the others on hold until we / you think they are [worthwhile] interesting again. Also it became almost a part time job and I have to have more time for other activities.
I asked the journalists that arrived yesterday to leave today because they took too much of our time and were using too much of standard time.
Please inform us if you make agreements or appointments or even when there is only the possibility that a journalist is coming to Baidoa. For the moment we decided not to have any journalists anymore on our compound.

Fax from MSF Holland Communication Department to MSF Holland Baidoa, 8 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Hi Wouter,
Alles OK? We will follow the propositions you made in your fax of this morning. So – in principle – no more interviews in the coming days, and no other journalists (except NOS Journaal/Koert) to Baidoa. Any changes in this policy will be decided by mutual agreement. Yesterday was probably one of the top days of media attention in the history of MSF! Thanks to you! And not only the quantity, but you also did again very well! [...] We'll get

12. Main evening news bulletin on Dutch public TV channel Nederlandse Omroep Stichting.

you a video tape with the "Best of Wouter Van Empelen." The *Algemeen Dagblad* also had a good article, based on an interview with you.
And how important is this for MSF at this moment? Today one million (!!) households in Holland received an MSF brochure. This is the main fundraising event of MSF this year! And the phone this morning was "roodgloeiend" (jam packed) with people who wanted to give for Somalia and to MSF. So the media attention of yesterday could lead to thousands of EXTRA donors!!! I don't think I am optimistic but I really think this could be a result. [...]
WARNING: of course several TV and radio stations now have our phone number in Baidoa. Although they know they only received it exceptionally for the interview, it is always possible that one of them tries to sneak through and will get to you without consulting us. Let us know if any station tries to sneak through and just tell them you don't have the time and send them to us.

'Mogadishu Airport Shut from Midnight ahead of Marines Arrival', **AFP** (France), 8 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Two U.S. F14 fighters overflew the southwestern Somali town of Baidoa Tuesday, where fighting between rival factions has left 78 dead in recent days, said a member of Médecins Sans Frontières-Holland (MSF, Doctors Without Borders).
"The overflight by these two American planes made the factions a little nervous," said the MSF official, who said the medical charity's three-strong team had remained inside their building because of the fighting. He said fighting continued Tuesday between members of the Somali Democratic Movement and supporters of General Mohamed Farah Aideed, the main warlord in Mogadishu, and other smaller rival clans.

'Baidoa Racked by Rush for Loot, "Bystander, 4, Shot in Chest"', ***The Globe and Mail*** (Canada), Geoffrey York, 9 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
"As the looters gain more power, the clans are losing power and Baidoa is slipping into total anarchy," said Dr. James Orbinski, a Toronto physician who is serving as a relief worker in the city. "Food is the only commodity of any value here. It's being stolen to feed the armies. Every day it gets worse. There are shootings every day, and the number of people killed is increasing."
Last weekend, Dr. Orbinski treated a four-year-old girl who had been shot in the chest. The girl, who was a bystander when a gunfight broke out, was critically wounded. "There's a certain horror to it," he said. He recalls another girl of the same age dragging an AK-47 assault rifle behind her as she asked for candy from the relief workers.
Delays in the promised military rescue mission have made Baidoa increasingly dangerous. The United Nations Security Council approved a U.S.-led military intervention last Thursday, and relief agencies quickly withdrew most of their staff from Baidoa. The troops failed to arrive on the weekend, however, and this left the small group of relief workers vulnerable to the well-armed looters. The looters are making a final grab for the lucrative stocks of food that will be well protected after the military forces arrive.
Meanwhile, clan factions are intensifying the tribal warfare that could make things difficult when the military forces begin disarming the population. "We had expected the troops on Saturday morning," said Wouter van Empelen, general co-ordinator in Baidoa

for the organization Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). "When they make such a decision, they should act immediately. They should have known that it would cause tensions. We've waited for three days, and the tensions are racing very high. Everyone is totally fed up with the situation."

There were at least 22 casualties from one gunfight between armed factions in Baidoa on Monday. In another incident, six people were shot and several died when two clans fought for control of security operations at a Red Cross food warehouse. A day earlier, there were 24 casualties when gunmen raided a CARE International relief operation in Baidoa. Six others were killed in a separate gunfight, and four more relief agencies were attacked by looters.

Dr. Orbinski, who is medical director for Médecins Sans Frontières in Baidoa, said the armed factions have splintered into 21 different tribal groups, and the local clan elders have held marathon meetings in a futile effort to reduce the warfare. The organization normally has 11 [international] workers in Baidoa, but it withdrew almost all of them on Friday, leaving only three, including Dr. Orbinski and Mr. van Empelen. They are determined to stay. "If we leave, the mortality rate will go sky high," Mr. van Empelen says. "We are the only medical staff here."

At night, their compound is protected by 12 gunmen and two vehicles carrying heavy machine guns. A third vehicle, carrying an anti-aircraft gun, is posted outside the compound for further protection. (Anti-aircraft guns, left over from Somalia's days as a Cold War pawn, are routinely turned into standard cannons for land battles in the current civil war). As dusk falls, the guards pray to Allah in an improvised mosque in one corner of the compound. "We swear on the holy book that we will stay with you," the guards have told the relief workers. "If you die, we die."

When the U.S. military forces arrive in Baidoa, the relief agencies will gather in a secret protected location to wait until the fighting is over. "There will be fighting, that is 100-percent guaranteed," Mr. van Empelen said. The relief agencies are desperately continuing their work. During the past 20 days, MSF has provided immunization and other treatment to 20,000 people in Baidoa.

The relief work has helped reduce the death rate in Baidoa from 350 every day in September to about 50 a day now. But starvation has demolished the children of Baidoa. The percentage of those under 5 is far lower than it would be in a normal population. Even the adults are "very weak now," Dr. Orbinski said. "That's very unusual in a famine. It's an indicator of an extreme disaster."

When I started my mission in Baidoa, in November, we had 150 guards – we call them guards but it was in fact a small army of 150 guys who were high on qat and took drugs every day. They had machine guns on top of cars and they had rocket launchers. All the organisations, ICRC, World Vision, CARE, MSF, were attacked. It was war. The situation was horrible – it was surrealistic. All the 'adult males' were killing each other with machine guns. I never discovered the reason – there was no oil in this part of the country, there were no diamonds, there was no gold. It wasn't for the religion because they all were Muslim. They were killing each other in a very dry landscape. All the children were dying. There were tens of thousands of skeletons in feeding centres and hundreds dying every day. The women were trying to find a little bit of food and water to keep their babies alive. It was a nightmare scenario. To provide aid to them, we had to protect ourselves from those 'adult males'. We hired our own 'adult males'.

At the end of November, beginning of December, Bush and Powell announced on CNN that there was going to be a so-called 'humanitarian intervention.' 'Humanitarian intervention' is bullshit. In fact, they were going to conquer Somalia for themselves. They knew that in the

north there was oil because they had prospected years ago. So they said that, simultaneously, they would intervene in Mogadishu and Baidoa. They didn't give a date. Suddenly, the 9th of December, they entered Mogadishu with a big show with CNN in front. I was told that they would be coming to Baidoa that same day but they didn't come. Instead, all the looters from Mogadishu came to us. In Baidoa we had a buffer because the looters knew that we were well protected and the work we did was ok. They were vicious killers but somewhere deep inside of them they were human beings so they kept a little bit of distance at least. But now all the looters from Mogadishu came and they were strangers who didn't know MSF. So, we were even more attacked after the Americans came in to supposedly protect us. IRC was attacked three times a day. CARE was in foxholes. So I evacuated part of my team when the news came that they were intervening, a day before or the same day, Mogadishu evacuated the whole team to Mombasa. I stayed with James Orbinski the Medical Coordinator and with the administrator. With the local staff, we had 5 OPDs and 1 IPD [inpatient department] so we kept stuff running. And we kept the medical care and feeding centres of Concern. But the attacks became more vicious by the day and we could not do our work. Before, the looters kept a certain distance and we knew where the danger was coming from so we could take preventative measures. But now the whole thing was thrown out of balance by the Americans who had come to 'protect' us. So we were very angry. Every night we were attacked. We had a policy that whatever happens – even if the whole compound explodes at night – we will not leave the room. I had a steel door in my bedroom and the three of us slept there. If they would try to enter my bedroom, there was a little window and a plank and we could put the plank out the window and we would walk out the plank to the neighbours. It never came that far, but we were heavily attacked. In the morning, you would see that the gates of the compound would have 5 cm holes. These were steel doors. Once at night, I heard this incredible explosion and I thought that something really terrible had happened. So in the morning at 5 am I went to the guard and asked him what happened. He said that he had launched a rocket and hit the tree. The tree was gone: it had phosphorised like matches.

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Coordinator in Baidoa, November 1992-February 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

On 9 December 1992, the US troops landed in Mogadishu with much media fanfare and took control of the city. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary General, announced a five-stage action plan "to extract Somalia from chaos", and emphasised the "division of tasks" between the US commander of Operation 'Restore Hope' and the UN. He announced that a new "national reconciliation" meeting between the Somali parties was scheduled for early January.

'Americans Control Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 9th December 1992 (in French).

Extract:

The landing rolled out smoothly, under the spotlight of the television cameras and flash photography of the international press. The American soldiers had to keep asking journalists to stand back. The media hype around the landing was striking to all those present; *The Washington Post* considered some aspects of the night "borderline grotesque".

Decked in battledress, heavily armed, and faces painted smoky black, the American Marines started landing on Mogadishu beach towards 10:30 pm French time on Tuesday night (12:30 am local time). The forward contingent, made up of 1,800 men, took control of the city's port and airport at around 5:00 am French time [...] The American Marines encountered no resistance. The armed groups battling for control of Mogadishu since the overthrow of President Siad Barre in January 1991 were nowhere to be seen. They had followed the instructions of the two rival warlords following their meeting on Tuesday with President Bush's Special Envoy, Mr Robert Oakley. [...]
The two 'warlords' promised their full cooperation. This did not stop the first American officer to land on the beach, Second-Lieutenant Kirk Coker, declaring before some 50 amused journalists, "We've been told the sector could be dangerous." It soon became apparent that nerves are jittery. The first Marines to land, yelling obscenities, got to work by capturing a few unarmed Somalis sleeping in a hangar at the airport. They dragged them outside, forced them to lie face down on the ground and tied their hands behind their backs with plastic cuffs. In the port, the American soldiers arrived by helicopter, firing machine-gun rounds above the heads of dozens of journalists who had been instructed to lie face down on the ground.

'Mr Boutros-Ghali Announces a Five-Stage Action Plan for Somalia', **AFP** (France), 9 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
On Wednesday, the UN Secretary General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, announced a five-stage action plan to extract Somalia from chaos, with a meeting planned in Addis Ababa "around 4 January" to prepare a possible international conference on political settlement. "We are at the start of a process," declared Mr Boutros-Ghali in an interview with the AFP. He stressed that it was "too early" to talk about solutions such as placing Somalia under alternative control. "We have no pre-conceived ideas," he nonetheless added. [...] According to him, "there's a division of tasks" between the American command of Operation 'Restore Hope' and the UN. "The mandate given to the joint command by the UN is limited to a one-off operation for establishing security." "The second stage will be the conclusion of the joint command, to be replaced by the United Nations' peacekeeping operations."
"Meanwhile, there is a third operation, that of national reconciliation, which has already begun," and an "informal and preparatory" meeting will be held around 4 January in Addis Ababa "to try to establish an agenda for an international conference," said Mr Boutros-Ghali, who gave an interview to AFP in his office at the UN's headquarters in New York. According to the secretary general, the fourth step will consist of pursuing the delivery of international aid "under the United Nations' auspices", and "finally, there's a fifth step, which is the country's reconstruction."

Operation 'Restore Hope' was considered by some as the first time the international community had exercised the 'right to interfere' with a 'humanitarian intervention' during a war. Among them, Bernard Kouchner, the French Minister of Health and Humanitarian Affairs, who was claiming the authorship of this concept. One week previously, he had demonstrated his support for exercising this right by carrying a bag of rice on his back, under the glare of cameras. V12

In France, the media 'circus' accompanying the landing was widely criticised, particularly by Rony Brauman, President of the MSF France Board of Directors, who sounded the alarm again on confusion between military and humanitarian operations.

'Mission to Somalia: French Fault "Circus" Coverage of the Arrival of U.S. Troops', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Alan Riding, 10 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
French newspapers also said the decision to send 2,100 French troops to Somalia had divided the French Cabinet, with the Defense Minister, Pierre Joxe, opposing the move and President Francois Mitterrand finally coming down on the side of Bernard Kouchner, the Health and Humanitarian Affairs Minister.
Mr. Joxe reportedly argued that France was already taking part in United Nations-backed peace missions in Cambodia and the Balkans and could not send troops to every trouble spot. Mr. Kouchner, in contrast, has long defended the principle of 'humanitarian intervention' to save innocent victims of civil fighting. Foreign Minister Roland Dumas was quoted by a spokesman as having told a Cabinet meeting today that the international community had taken "a decisive step" by using military force to save a threatened civilian population.
But after television pictures of the American marines landing in Somalia were broadcast here this morning, there was a strong reaction in political circles here against French association with what Alain Juppé, a leader of the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic, described as "a circus." "I thought we were down there to save children who were dying of hunger," he said. "But if it is to organize a gigantic international media show, I don't think it's right." That was an apparent reference to Mr. Kouchner, who was photographed last weekend in Mogadishu carrying sacks of rice purchased with money collected by French children.
Mr. Kouchner was also criticized by Rony Brauman, president of the Paris-based France's Doctors Without Borders, who described the photograph as "indecent." [...] Jean-Pierre Chevenement, a former Defense Minister, said he thought 30,000 soldiers was too many "to handle a few highway robbers" and he expressed surprise that "hundreds" of television reporters were awaiting the pre-dawn arrival of the first American commandos. Jean Auroux, another deputy from Mr. Mitterrand's Socialist Party, said he was "very shocked" that the arrival of United States forces was timed to coincide with American news programs.
"It's not what I expect of the United Nations or of Western societies," he said. Pierre Lellouche, a Foreign Affairs adviser to former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, likened the American landing to "John Wayne arriving at the Alamo with the cavalry." He continued: "Everything's going fine. But the Indians mustn't shoot too much. Because if they start shooting, there are going to be public-opinion problems."

'MSF's President Denounces the Grotesque Antics of Kouchner and his Bags of Rice', **AFP** (France), Paris, 11 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Rony Brauman, President of Médecins Sans Frontières, denounces the "grotesque antics of Bernard Kouchner with his French bags of rice", when bags of rice sent by French children to Somalia arrived on a beach near Mogadishu in the presence of the minister

of health and humanitarian action a week ago. The television channels showed images of Bernard Kouchner carrying a bag of rice on his back up the beach to a truck.
In an interview with the weekly newspaper, *Valeurs Actuelles*, the president of the humanitarian organisation added that the "circus that played out on the beaches of Mogadishu was a scandal", alluding to the first American troops' landing last Tuesday night in front of a bank of TV cameras. Rony Brauman considers that "our minister seems to have forgotten one essential point: a donation is only free for the person making it. The person receiving it often finds it humiliating. This is why humanitarian action demands decency and restraint."

'Will Somalia Mission Enshrine U.N.'s "Right to Interfere?"' **Reuters** (UK), Andrew Gumbel, 14 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
"The spectacle of tens of thousands of U.N. troops piling into the Horn of Africa -- not to wage war, but to save hundreds of thousands of lives from famine and political anarchy -- is astonishing enough in modern times. But the U.S.-led mission to Somalia could also prove a milestone in establishing the international community's "right to interfere" in conflicts around the globe where the toll of human misery becomes too great to contemplate from a distance.
Bernard Kouchner, France's go-getting Minister for Humanitarian Action, has advocated just such a "right to interfere" for years. "Taking action in Somalia is only the beginning," he told a recent news conference. "People are also dying elsewhere: in southern Sudan, in Liberia, in Mozambique, in Angola, in Burma and in Bosnia." Kouchner hopes U.N. Security Council Resolution 794, which authorised Operation Restore Hope to Somalia, will prove a turning point in history by enshrining the principle of humanitarian intervention in the affairs of sovereign states. "Humanitarian action and the right to interfere are the great modern political ideas... that states do not belong to governments, they belong to people," Kouchner said in an interview with Reuters earlier this year. "That is a huge change, and if I have contributed to it I am very proud."
During the Cold War, international task forces of any kind were all but impossible because two of the U.N. Security Council's permanent members -- the United States and the Soviet Union -- were irreconcilably at loggerheads. All that changed last year with the crumbling of Soviet communism and the Gulf War, which set a precedent for international action, albeit belligerent, and prompted U.S. President George Bush to hail a "New World Order."
The first triumph for the "right of interference" came immediately after the Gulf War when Kouchner, among others, persuaded the United Nations to authorise the establishment of safe havens for Iraq's threatened Kurdish population. But Kouchner's ideas are far from universally welcome and raise searching questions about humanitarian versus political interests, the distinction between altruism and neo-colonialism. Kouchner has often clashed with the International Red Cross, which fears the "right of interference" could jeopardise its role as a neutral broker in conflicts and shatter a fragile international respect for the Geneva Conventions which delineate the limits of acceptable behaviour in wartime.
Some critics argue that humanitarian interference, while laudable for non-governmental organisations, is potentially harmful when undertaken by governments with interests to defend. "This action (in Somalia) introduces real confusion between what is humanitarian and what is military," said one of Kouchner's most vocal critics, Rony Brauman, who is head of the medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). "I don't like the idea that an

MSF team landing in a crisis zone could be mistaken for the bridgehead of a marine division." Brauman is also suspicious of Kouchner's high media profile and accuses of him of milking the misery of others for his own glorification and political advancement. Television pictures of Kouchner personally delivering rice to the starving in Mogadishu this month "went beyond the bounds of decency", Brauman said -- echoing concern that the Somalia crisis should not turn into a photo opportunity for world leaders anxious to prove they care about the Third World.

The intervention was seized by Kouchner and others, who said, 'The American intervention confirms the "right to interfere" with a humanitarian intervention.' At MSF, we all agreed that it was not a humanitarian intervention. Our approach was a more intellectual one, which did not make the news headlines. We were pulling against the tide. We had a more in-depth take on things: 'We can't talk of an external, state-led "humanitarian intervention", because there's no state involved.'

Dr Alain Destexhe, MSF International, General Secretary 1991-1995, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Meanwhile, in Kenya, three vehicles belonging to MSF and Catholic Relief Services were stolen by looters and driven to Somalia. Kenya announced the closure of its border with Somalia until the vehicles were returned.
In southern Somalia, in the lull before the storm of the US troops' arrival, the looters rampaged.

'Kenya Closes its Borders with Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 7 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Kenya closed its border with Somalia on Sunday, following the arrival of armed refugees who stole vehicles from charitable organisations, we heard on Monday from official sources in Nairobi. Five Somalis, heavily armed, seized three four-wheel drive vehicles belonging to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Belgium and the American Catholic Relief, in Mandera and El Wak, two border towns, then headed back to Somalia with their loot, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The District Commissioner, Mr Eliud Parsankul, told the press that the border would remain shut until the seniors of the various Somali clans brought about the restitution of the vehicles.

'Fighting and Looting in Southern Somalia', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 10 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
"We have suspended our flights over Baidoa for security reasons," explained Catherine Cazeaux, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Nairobi. "Armed men came into our premises to loot it, but our staff were not concerned," she specified.

The American organisation International Medical Corps (IMC) also cancelled a flight for Baidoa scheduled for Friday [...] In the port city of Kismayo, the World Food Programme (WFP) cancelled its flight on Thursday for the same security concerns. This city, the second biggest after Mogadishu and of strategic importance because of its port, has not received any food aid for weeks. It is in the hands of General Aidid and the Ogadenis of Colonel Omar Jess, who joined forces to take the city on 15 May.
Here again, the announced arrival of American and French troops has plunged the city into a looting spree and fighting between armed groups. The MSF Belgium and ICRC premises have been shot at. Elsewhere, the fighting continues around Bardhere (southeast) to take control of the town. The combat, taking place near the Kenyan border, has led to the evacuation of NGOs. Kenya has closed its border in the whole northeast region, up to the Ethiopian border post of Dolo.

On 10 December 1992, the MSF Holland team in Baidoa suggested the issue of a new press release protesting against the delays in troop arrivals outside Mogadishu. There were doubts on the utility of such a message in the MSF movement, given that the message was over-generalised and thus unclear, even contradictory: did it denounce the intervention or the tardy deployment?

Fax from MSF Holland Emergency Project Baidoa to Amsterdam Desk, 10 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Dear all:
Thought you might like a little update on the situation here. As I type there is a major gun battle going on about 200 meters away from our house, and we are moving a jeep with antiaircraft weaponry mounted on its roof into our compound. A wounded man (about 18 years old) was brought into our compound with the lower half of his chin shattered by gunfire. I provided emergency treatment for him and he has now been taken to the IMC surgical hospital.
The fighting around our compound has escalated this afternoon due to several factors. General Aideeid sent an envoy to Baidoa to expel the governor so that he can be replaced with a local SDM leader. The governor is reluctant to go, and his personal guards are heavily armed and resisting. A second factor is an intra-clan clash between the SDM that has been cooking along for the last four days. Two days ago this fighting left 50 soldiers dead with 10 bystanders also killed by stray bullets and vehicles driving through a crowded market. Yesterday, the fighting took a downturn, but today it has flared again with several dead and several casualties.
A third factor has been the expected arrival of American troops. Not only did the announcement catalyse existing tensions between warring factions and clans, but it also set looters off on a spree to grab what they can before further looting is prevented by US forces. As I write, the ICRC warehouse (400 meters away) is being looted, in addition to the heavy anti-aircraft and gunfire taking place at the governor's residence (200 meters away). Over the last four days, CARE, UNICEF and World Vision have been looted. One C130 has been looted completely in Bardera. In Kismayo, ICRC was looted this AM as well as 7 MSF Belgium expats and ICRC expats have evacuated from Kismayo. Several Somali nationals working for NGO's in Kismayo were killed today.

So, as you can see, the situation here in Somalia is somewhat active, and particularly in Baidoa. PLEASE don't worry too much, we have taken extraordinary security measures, our security staff is extremely loyal, and we FEEL safe with the people around us. Our spirits are good.
Please consider release of the following press statement:
The American announcement and security council approval of US armed forces into war-torn Somalia has catalysed longstanding tensions between existing warlords and clans, and has set gangs of independent looters on a flurry of NGO targeted activities. In the last four days in Baidoa alone more than 60 people have died in gun battles between these various factions. This is in addition to the 50 people who die every day from starvation and disease in Baidoa, a city of 15,000 swelled to 70,000 due to displaced persons seeking food and shelter. In Baidoa alone, 4 separate episodes of NGO targeted looting have taken place in the last 3 days.
While MSF has no position on the propriety of military intervention in Somalia, we strongly protest the manner in which this intervention has been managed. The delay following the announcement has caused untold havoc locally and nationally, and has drawn to a small trickle the already scarce humanitarian aid reaching this desperate population. NGOs and local clan chiefs and elders have not been contacted, and the one already belated meeting scheduled for today in Mogadishu has been cancelled by the US military. The catalysed tensions and increased looting have forced some NGOs to evacuate completely from Baidoa, and all remaining NGOs providing imperative humanitarian aid have been forced to reduce their expatriate staff to mere skeleton teams. The already scaled down feeding and medical programs have been forced to reduce even further, and the already insecure position of expatriates has also deteriorated even further.
We strongly urge the US military forces to communicate with NGOs and local leaders, and to act decisively and quickly so as to prevent further death and carnage in this desperate country.

Message from Anne Fouchard, MSF France Communications Officer, to programme managers in Europe and coordination teams in Kenya and Somalia', 11 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
The coordinators and others [...] meeting in Addis Ababa think it could be important to issue a press release in the days to come, and depending on what happens, on the American intervention rolling out under a UN mandate in Somalia and its consequences on humanitarian aid in both Somalia and the neighbouring countries harbouring Somali refugees. Over and above the debate on MSF's position for or against Operation 'Restore Hope' (which it now seems far too late to adopt):
- 3/4 of MSF teams have been evacuated from the field and a number of others are 'homebound', so stalled in their work by the risks and reduction/halt in supply.
- the cost of this standby in human lives is in total contradiction to the stated objective of this intervention, which aims to optimise humanitarian aid.
- we are not so naive as to think that MSF can be informed of the details of a military operation, but any humanitarian considerations are remarkably absent from both words and the reality in the field. NGOs have received no information on the possible continuation of humanitarian assistance (theirs and the UN's).
Meanwhile, the teams are highly concerned about the likelihood of security problems shifting to the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders, while nothing is being done to prevent the

arrival of the numerous armed men already fleeing towards to the borders. MSF could soon find itself unable to provide assistance to nearly one million refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya. This is why we suggest a press release. To note: in any press release, we would focus on facts; i.e. MSF evacuations, security problems on the borders, etc.

'MSF Calls on the Coalition Forces and the United Nations to Facilitate the Re-initiation and Protection of Humanitarian Relief', **Draft Press Release**, MSF, 14 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
MSF calls on the coalition forces and the United Nations to take into account the concrete consequences of their intervention and adapt their operation so as to protect humanitarian relief efforts outside the capital and facilitate the re-initiation of activities. The deployment of American and French troops in Mogadishu has led to the partial interruption of Médecins Sans Frontières' work and exacerbated the tensions in outlying cities such as Baidoa and Kismayo. Due to high tensions or fighting, Médecins Sans Frontières has been forced to reduce its teams in Kismayo, Merca, and Baidoa and evacuate Hudur, Kansardhere, Ghiobar, and Aadan Yabaal. The [international] staff remaining in the field continue their work as best they can, providing nutritional and medical aid.
The cost in human lives of these partial programme interruptions could rise significantly if activities cannot be re-initiated soon. Meanwhile, the teams are highly concerned about the likelihood of security problems shifting to the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders, while nothing is being done to prevent the arrival of the numerous armed men already fleeing towards the borders. MSF could soon find itself unable to provide assistance to nearly one million refugees living in precarious conditions in Ethiopia and Kenya.

'**Message** from MSF teams in Somalia', Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium Coordinator, Dominique Martin, MSF France Head of Programme Somalia, Patrick Vial, MSF France Coordinator, December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
We learn with concern that a war of press releases is raging in Europe. The arrival of 3,000 (or more) UN Peacekeepers is an issue of major political importance for the various Somalia factions.
THE CONTRADICTORY NATURE OF SUCH PRESS RELEASES WOULD OBVIOUSLY REPRESENT A HIGH SECURITY RISK FOR EACH OF THE TEAMS IN PLACE.
Our feeling is that the security of the personnel and the future of the missions in Somalia would be placed in jeopardy by such conduct. We hope those concerned are fully aware of their responsibilities in these matters.
THE SETTLING OF SUCH SCORE IN PUBLIC WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO US.

On 11 December 1992, MSF Holland issued a new press release describing the activities of its team in Baidoa, which continued to be the focus of international press reports.

'**Press release**: Despite the Fighting, Médecins Sans Frontières Continues to Offer Assistance in Baidoa', MSF Holland, 11 December 1992 (in Dutch).

Extract:
Despite the fighting, MSF is managing to continue its work in the city of Baidoa in Somalia. The team visits the eight polyclinics it has set up, on a daily basis. According to Wouter van Empelen, the Baidoa Project Coordinator, MSF also offers medical assistance to the nutritional centres run by other organisations. Around 1,000 patients are treated for diarrhoea, respiratory tract infections, and scabies in these polyclinics and nutritional centres every day. This healthcare is largely delivered by staff trained by Médecins Sans Frontières.
At present, the international MSF team in Baidoa is composed of three people. The ten other team members were evacuated to the port city of Mombasa (Kenya) last weekend.

'Death Won't Wait for the Marines', ***The Independent*** (UK), Richard Dowden, 13 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
Of the seven aid agencies working here, six have been looted in the past week. In addition, 60 people have died in a clan fight. [...]
At Médecins Sans Frontières Holland, Wouter Van Empelen explained the night escape route. "If the shooting comes into the compound, you pull the bars off the window, push your mattress through because of the thorn bush, and climb the wall. The people in the house at the back expect us."
As we travelled into the town, now accompanied by two MSF 'technicals' with heavy machine-guns on the roof, the moment I had dreaded arrived. Behind a wall in a small house, we were shown them. They are why we are here. They are why the aid agencies are here. They are why the Americans have come to Somalia. All I can see are eyes, great round dead eyes, then huge round heads, small round bodies in blue cloth with long, thin black sticks hanging off them. They are women and children.
On the wrist of each is a small white band. "The white group are the ones who are OK," explained Wouter. "When they first come, they are in the red group. They are more than 70 per cent malnourished; they get special food eight times a day. Then they move to the blue group after about two months, and then to the white group." So this is the best group.
The red group were in five green tents, about 1,600 of them at the moment, in the centres fed by Concern, the Irish aid agency. One child – what might once have been a child – convulsed gently on his mother's lap, the only sound a soft, monotonous retching. And 1,600 others were like him. Next to the feeding centre, young men were playing football.
Who did this? Did God do this? "No, we do not blame God for this," said Batar, one of the workers. "We did this, we Somalis, Siad Barre did this. No, this is not the fault of God." In Somalia's appalling famine, there is none of the "God's will" attitude encountered in the parts of Ethiopia and Sudan that suffer recurrent famine. Somalia has never had such famine, and this is its richest area. This was caused by war. By man.
There are no overall figures for the town, but the Red Cross says that in its own centres 5,000 died in August, 6,000 in September, 2,500 in October and 1,400 in November. Now the figures are rising again. All the aid agencies were feeding people in the surrounding areas, perhaps as many as 100,000. As soon as the Americans said they were coming, two things happened. Most of the people got out flags and flowers ready to welcome

them. And the looters went into overdrive before the final whistle. The Red Cross and Care were robbed at gunpoint and everyone lived in terror. Six Care workers were shot dead when their convoy was attacked. The US Air Force stopped flying in food, and all the aid agencies had to stop supplying surrounding areas.
The agencies told everyone that the Americans were coming today, tomorrow, now – anything to scare the looters away. Then we heard on the shortwave radio that the US commander, General Robert Johnson, had told aid agencies that they would not reach Baidoa for another six days. By evening it was broadcast on the BBC Somali service.
"It was like telling the looters they had five more nights to take what's left," said Wouter Van Empelen. All the aid agencies agree that the late arrival of the American forces – and the announcement of it – will cost many lives. They are frightened, and furious with the Americans. It took us an hour to drive from where we were buzzed by the Cobra to the people dying of hunger; it would have taken the helicopter 10 minutes. It will take the Americans a week to arrive, we are told.
We travelled to the old Russian-built military airbase, where on the tarmac a Hercules of Southern Air Transport from Mombasa was unloading some food and medical supplies for MSF, some in Christmas paper decorated with bells and holly. Back at the MSF house, the three remaining MSF workers unwrapped their Christmas boxes: cake and biscuits, nuts and paté.
An extraordinary meeting took place in the sitting-room between Abdul Mohammed Idris Lesto and Husein Warsame Gure, clan elders of rival, if allied, political movements. Lesto negotiated the end of the recent clan clash, and both promised MSF that they would do everything to stop the house being attacked. Husein offered to put a massive anti-aircraft gun outside the front door, and denounced the 'mafias'. Lesto agreed. But the aid workers suspect that much of the looting is done by their people, some of them guards. Yesterday at 4 am, a burst of firing broke out close by. Then silence. Later I learnt that the house belonging to Concern had been hit. One guard had been killed, but the others had driven off the looters. We had a gun-wagon to escort us out of town. "I shall be counting the nights now, every night till the Americans come," Wouter said as we parted. I wondered if he would be alive then.

On 16 December 1992, furious about the late arrival of international troops in Baidoa, the MSF Holland team told international press correspondents, notably CNN, that the president of the United States did not keep his promises because the US troops that had landed in Mogadishu had still not been deployed to Baidoa to protect relief efforts.
On 17 December, the US contingent of troops and the French Foreign Legion participating in Operation 'Restore Hope' finally deployed to Baidoa.

'Marines Escort Food to Hungry', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Donatella Lorch, 17 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
With more firepower than this small town has ever seen, more than 700 American marines and French troops secured the local airstrip today and guarded a truckload of food as it moved from a warehouse to an orphanage. It was the first food actually delivered to the hungry under the protection of the American-led military operation in Somalia. The amount of food delivered was meagre compared to the quantities that

relief agencies have managed to distribute even before the arrival of the marines, although there were plenty of television cameras to record the delivery [...]
The arrival of the marines and 140 French troops has pacified the streets of this bush town, 140 miles northwest of Mogadishu, apparently driving into hiding the Somalis who terrorized the town. Less than a week ago, the streets were controlled by teen-aged Somali gunmen riding around in jeeps, and relief agencies were forced to barricade themselves in their compounds to ward off looters. Today there were no visible guns [...]
There were those who obviously were not impressed or intimidated by the American arrival. Dr. James Orbinski of Doctors Without Borders, a French-based relief organization, said that at about 11 A.M., several hours after the Americans had settled into the airport, gunmen went to a clinic run by his group and threatened to shoot it up unless a Somali guard at the clinic who had been caught stealing the week before was rehired.
Officials Voice Relief
Officials involved in the distribution of food said they were greatly relieved by the military presence and the possibility of finally being able to provide help to the starving. Although no concrete plans for regular escorts were discussed the first day, the military immediately contacted the relief agencies and put troops at their disposal. It is in Baidoa that the military mission will first be put to the test, relief officials said, although the worst of the famine appears to be over here. About 60 people were reported to have died Tuesday in Baidoa, compared to 300 a day three months ago. Most of those who are dying are the very old or the very weak [...]
"We think it's a show of force and that's very deliberate," said Col. Gregory Newbold, who is in charge of the operation, as he shook hands with little children. "There are people that don't want us here. It's deterrence."

Finally, we organised a meeting with all the coordinators of the organisations, ICRC, World Vision, and everyone else. We said that we had to say something publicly about this situation because the Americans were supposed to come and protect us but now we were in deeper troubles than we ever were and we could not reach the people. Everybody agreed. So we made a statement on paper and they were to consult their headquarters and come back in the afternoon. But ICRC was not allowed by Geneva, Concern in Ireland said no – they all had an argument not to do it. Then somebody said, 'Why don't you and James make a statement as MSF and tell them that you also speak for all of the other independent relief workers in Baidoa?' That's what we did. I had been talking for days with a CNN reporter who is a good friend of mine about what was going on and he had told me: 'the popular opinion in the United States is very important to the president. So, if you want to reach the president, you talk to the people. In other words, you talk to me – in front of my camera.' So we called all the networks, CNN, ABC [American Broadcasting Company], NBC [National Broadcasting Company] – the whole world press was in Baidoa, we had a golden opportunity – and we said, 'Last week, Bush and Powell told you that they were going to intervene in Somalia and protect the humanitarian workers. They came and because they came, we are in deeper troubles than we have ever been in our whole life. So obviously, you cannot trust the president of the United States."
The next day, a private jet landed on the airstrip in Baidoa, and a guy came out. I knew him from my first mission in British Guinea. Now he was the assistant of Oakley – the special envoy of the US President in Mogadishu – and he had seen me on CNN and told his boss, 'I know this guy.' So he walked into the MSF compound and he said he had been sent by Oakley and he was here to see me. He said, 'look, you really have to stop talking about this because you destroyed the whole intervention.' Weeks later, he told me that President Bush had seen James and I on TV, called Oakley in Mogadishu and said, 'what are you doing? I see these MSF people

accusing me.' Oakley said he had no logistics to go there and Bush said, 'go – whatever you do – go!' So, Oakley's assistant came. And I asked him, 'When are you coming with your people to protect us? Tonight, there is going to be another statement to the media unless you can tell me that you are going to chase out those looters.' He said, 'I cannot tell you because it's a military secret. But when you wake up tomorrow we have a meeting with the commander of the American troops in the IMC compound. I said, 'ok – for today, there will be no statement on television.' At night, I did not hear them coming but the next morning, Baidoa was full of American soldiers.
So we went to the IMC compound, and there was Oakley, and the military guys and lot of equipment, etc. We had this meeting and they said that they had two trucks with them and that they were going to the orphanages to deliver some humanitarian goods. So they went, with the whole world press following them, to make the pictures for the front page of Time *and* Newsweek *and everybody was watching them. So you could see the commander shaking hands with the baby orphan, etc. And then there was the whole show and they left. But halfway, the captain said, 'We have to go back because we forgot to unload the trucks!' Can you imagine that nobody had been instructed to unload the truck? It was a whole show. This is how it started, the first day.*

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Coordinator in Baidoa, November 1992-February 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

During the first ten days following the arrival of the international forces' contingents, the situation stabilised in Baidoa. Then it deteriorated again, following provocations by Somali faction snipers and the inappropriate and disproportionate reactions of US soldiers.
Faced with their attempts to disarm humanitarian organisations' guards, the MSF team, whose confidence in the protection offered by the US troops was limited, decided to keep up its own security system.

'Medical Emergency Programme Baidoa, Somalia Medical **Report** MSF Holland', James Orbinsky, MSF Holland Medical Coordinator, 1 January 1993 (in English).

Extract:
In the last one-month period political tensions and the level of insecurity reached new heights following the announcement of a United States troops deployment to Somalia. The announcement catalysed existing tensions between clans and evacuation of the team was followed by a flurry of looting and banditry prior to the arrival of United States Marines to Baidoa, some 14 days after their initial announcement. The full team returned to Baidoa 2 days after the troops' arrival. The massive troop deployment, which is still underway, has brought relative security to the Baidoa region, and spurred the process of peace making and the rebuilding of a civil society.

What happened really was that for 10 days there was not a single bullet fired in Baidoa. It was nice to sleep, it was quiet. You were never allowed to walk outside the compound. You were always in a car with four guards on top, one facing every direction. And I was in there going to the OPD or the IPD. But after 10 days, the snipers tried to shoot at the Americans just to get a reaction and it went from worse to worse to worse. And

then they started to take away weapons and we had questions because we still had to protect ourselves. We still had our weapons and everything else. We still were doing what we did before because no NGO trusted them enough to give up their weapons. I was there and knew every detail of the context and the contact persons. I knew where the danger was coming from. I knew how to behave, etc. Those Americans had just jumped from an airplane and they had big guns and they thought that that was the law. But that's not how it works. So we kept our security team how it was.

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Coordinator in Baidoa, November 1992-February 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

In Kismayo, in the weeks preceding the arrival of United Nations troops, fighting between the rival forces of Morgan, brother-in-law of Siad Barre, and Jess, ally of Aidid, led to numerous dead and wounded, and the flight of hundreds of people from the city.
On 9 December 1992, after a night of looting, a party of international staff from humanitarian organisations, including seven MSF Belgium personnel, evacuated to Nairobi. The rest of the MSF team continued work under the protection of armed guards.
Dr Réginald Moreels, President of MSF Belgium, on a surgical mission in Kismayo, declared to *The New York Times* that the warlord Jess, who had initiated the violence, had told him that it would only last an evening.

'13 NGO Members Evacuate the City of Kismayo Due to the Violence', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 9 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Thirteen members of humanitarian organisations have been evacuated [...] from the port city of Kismayo, southeastern Somalia, following a "night of looting and shootouts", announced a World Food Programme (WFP) representative in Nairobi. "We re-routed a plane due for Bardhere (southwest) to Kismayo following an evacuation request," explained Brenda Barton of the WFP.
Seven of the evacuees worked in Kismayo for MSF Belgium, four for World Concern, and two for UNICEF, specified the WFP representative.

'At Least 60 Dead in Somali Towns Hit by Looting', **Reuters** (UK), 10 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
At least 60 people have been killed and 40 wounded in fighting over the last four days in the southern Somali port of Kismayo, the medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Thursday. Gunmen have also been on a looting spree in the central town of Baidoa, at the heart of Somalia's famine, aid agencies said.
U.S. Marines at the vanguard of a massive U.S.-led intervention force began stamping their control on the capital Mogadishu on Wednesday. But the troops have yet to fan out through the country on their mission to protect relief supplies for the starving from chronic insecurity, looting, and racketeering.

The violence in Kismayo, long ravaged by clan-based power struggles, appeared to be a case of opposing factions trying to settle old scores before the foreign soldiers move in, aid workers said. MSF's Belgian division said more than 40 people with gunshot wounds had been brought to the charity's hospital in the town by Wednesday. "It's been a heavy week," said Peter Casaer, a MSF coordinator, speaking in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.
Thirteen aid agency staff, including seven from MSF, were evacuated from Kismayo on Wednesday. The clashes there included an attack on a feeding centre run by the U.N. Children's Fund UNICEF on Monday in which four people were killed, Casaer said. "We don't know if this was politically motivated or just looting," he added. Casaer said local warlord Omar Jess had promised full cooperation with foreign troops when they arrive in Kismayo. Jess had told the population to disarm by Wednesday afternoon.

'Witnesses Report a Somali Massacre before US Arrival', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Jane Perlez, Kismayo, 29 December 1992 (in English).

Extract:
One of the five Somali doctors at the Kismayo hospital, Mohammed Musa Sugule, a Harti, was shot in front of his wife and children, according to several Somalis and to an account given to Reginald Moreels, the President of the medical agency Doctors Without Borders. Dr. Moreels, who arrived in Kismayo on Dec. 12, said he was told by a doctor at the hospital that Dr. Sugule, a well-known surgeon, left work one evening and joined his family in a place where there was "quarreling" with Jess fighters. Dr. Sugule was shot in the head, Dr. Moreels said. "In the whole week after my arrival, there was a lot of clan cleaning," Dr. Moreels said in an interview from Brussels. "I was struck by the hate among the people. A lot of people were shot to be killed – they were shot in the head, the thorax, the abdomen. In war there are two types of injuries: to the limbs to handicap or, as in this case, to kill" [...]
Dr. Moreels, of Doctors Without Borders, who stayed in Kismayo until Dec. 22, said he worked on "hundreds of war wounded" in the time he was there. On his arrival, Dr. Moreels said, he went to see Colonel Jess to seek a guarantee that all the people, no matter what clan, would have access to the hospital. Many Harti, he said, were afraid to come to the hospital and Harti staff members were too scared to leave the hospital grounds, he said. "Jess said it was just a little problem one night and things would go better," Dr. Moreels said. "It was a complete lie because all the nights there were clan cleanings."

On 18 December 1992, 200 US soldiers landed at Kismayo airport, disarmed one NGO's guards, and took off again.
On 20 December, the Belgian and US contingents landed in Kismayo port. This time they came to stay, and re-opened humanitarian relief supply lines, which had dried up since October.

'200 American Soldiers Land at Kismayo Before Taking Off Again', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 18 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Around 200 American soldiers arrived at the airport of Kismayo, a port city on the southeast coast, on Thursday afternoon. They left again before nightfall, we learned from a humanitarian source in Nairobi. This vanguard of Operation 'Restore Hope' left again because it "did not have the logistical wherewithal to stay", according to the declarations of one of its officers. The American soldiers met no resistance to their brief occupation of the airport, located some two km outside the city [...]
As a first move, the American soldiers disarmed the security guards of one of the NGOs on the ground. A spokesman for the NGO said, "With no security, we're sitting ducks for looting." An American officer replied "You won't be looted for long, we're coming back." The soldiers nonetheless returned the weapons to the security men before leaving.

'Landing at Kismayo, Incidents in Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Pierre Taillefer, Mogadishu, 20 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Belgian and American troops landed without incident at Kismayo port, in southern Somalia, on Sunday [...] "The troops received a warm welcome from the city's inhabitants, some were dancing in the streets," stated Colonel Peck [...]
The arrival of security forces in Somalia's second port – albeit with modest capacities – will open up a new entry point for the arrival of humanitarian aid and its distribution in the south, emphasised Mark Sterling of UNICEF, with satisfaction. The last boat to reach Kismayo was in October, and it was stripped clean by looters at the port, he added.

On 1 January 1992, near a Kismayo beach, the MSF Belgium team discovered the corpses of December's massacre victims. As Colonel Jess, the main commander behind the massacres, still held the town, the team decided against public denunciation, but brought the mass grave to the UNITAF forces' attention, which made their existence public.
On 2 January, the UNICEF representative in Kismayo, who had been alluding to these massacres since December, was murdered by his own guards. The following day in a press release, MSF Belgium asked if this death could have been avoided, and re-specified that the security conditions required by humanitarian organisations were still not guaranteed.

'A UNICEF Doctor Assassinated in Kismayo', **Belga**/**Reuters**/***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Brussels, 4 January 2003 (in French).

Extract:
A British doctor from UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Sean Devereux, 28 years old, was murdered in Kismayo (southeastern Somalia) on Saturday, where some 500 Belgian paratroopers are based. He was killed by one or several bullets in the back by his own guards after telling them that he intended to stop paying their excessive salaries, declared an American military spokesman, Colonel Fred Peck. [...]

According to a UNICEF spokesman, who has asked to remain unnamed, Dr Devereux's declarations on the massacres committed in Kismayo by 'Colonel' Jess' men [...], before the arrival of the multinational troops in the coastal town, were widely disseminated in the international press. This may explain the murder, he added.
On Sunday morning, a patrol of Belgian soldiers discovered 17 corpses in the airport neighbourhood, announced a military spokesman in Brussels. They could be the victims of fighting between Somali clans before the arrival of the Belgian and American troops on 20 December. [...] According to initial conclusions, the death of these 17 people – undoubtedly Somalis – seems to have taken place some weeks ago. So they could be victims of the fighting that took place in Kismayo and its surroundings just before the Belgian and American soldiers arrived.

'The Death of a UNICEF Representative in Kismayo Could Have Been Avoided', **Press Release**, MSF Belgium, 3 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Could the violent death of a member of UNICEF, which caused deep distress among humanitarian teams in Kismayo yesterday, have been avoided? When all is said and done, no active disarming of militia present in Kismayo has taken place yet. Thousands of arms are still in circulation, practically unimpeded. The death of the UNICEF representative is the most serious incident to have occurred since humanitarian teams set up in Kismayo nine months ago.
The discovery of a mass grave, with gunshot deaths dating to early December, provides proof of the massacres that took place just before the American and Belgian troops arrived in Kismayo. Repeated gunshots were heard in Kismayo again last night. MSF has demanded and received additional protection from the Belgian soldiers, who posted armoured vehicles around MSF's residence last night.
Even if the cities are under the control of the allied armies, humanitarian organisations' security is still not guaranteed. The conditions are even worse in the towns beyond the allied troops' control. The town of Jilib, north of Kismayo, has become so unsafe that MSF can no longer return.

On 1 January, I took the team to a beach outside Kismayo for a day off. One of the young Somalis in the team said to me, 'Do you remember the massacre? We never found the bodies. Do you want to see them?' We found the bodies half-hidden in the bushes, half-eaten by animals. We had a big discussion with the team, 'What should we do with this info?' They wanted to denounce right away. But Jess was still in town. I discussed it with Brussels and we decided to say nothing. We decided that the main issue was not who disseminated the information but that it was disseminated effectively, leading to an inquiry. So I went to see the commander of the UNITAF forces and suggested an agreement: I would give him info, but he wouldn't give MSF's name as the source. He'd heard talk of this massacre and was looking for the guilty parties, but there was no proof. So I advised him to send a team of soldiers down such-and-such a road to such-and-such a place, and act as if they made the discovery completely by chance. Afterwards, he could do what he wanted with the information, open an inquiry, etc... He sent a Belgian patrol out on the road in question, which found

the mass grave. So it came out in the press. I wanted to avoid worrying those Somalis who knew I was in the picture. Sean Devereux was killed the following day.

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

In late December 1992, MSF France decided to issue a further press release on the situation in Somalia and launch a fundraising appeal to finance the reinitiation of assistance in this country. In its letter to donors, an international staff member related the game of Somali children who slowed down cars by lying bodies on a track, where before the war, they laid down stones.

Minutes of Meeting of the Communications Department, MSF France, 21 December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: prepare a press release on MSF's current situation, review what's happened since the military intervention started, and the refugees' situation on the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders. The entire release should integrate the fundraising call for reinitiating humanitarian work in Somalia.

'**Letter** to Donors', Rony Brauman, President, MSF France Board of Directors, December 1992 (in French).

Extract:
Dear Sir, Dear Madam,
From time to time it so happens that for a few days or a few weeks, the news focuses on the distress of those people we assist. The most recent example is Somalia. For nearly two years, the Médecins Sans Frontières teams have been working alone, or practically alone, with the victims of a war long out of the public eye, feeding, treating, and saving these people from famine and epidemics. The silence has been temporarily lifted by wide coverage of the multiple relief efforts, but we fear that the Somalis' agony will return once the journalists have gone. The Médecins Sans Frontières teams will find themselves alone beside the victims, once again. We have been in this country a long time, so we know what these people have been through, and it goes well beyond the intolerable images of children condemned to starve.
In order to fully measure the extent of these people's distress, we offer you a testimony from one of our field coordinators. There is no blood, no cries, no physical suffering, and even though it is about children's delighted laughter, reading this testimony will no doubt be as big a shock for you as it was for us, and give you much pause for thought. This true testimony helps us to understand why our teams must continue delivering aid. For Médecins Sans Frontières, this involves feeding and treating people, but also doing our best to ensure that life triumphs over death, that over and above the wounds of war and famine, the moral bruises do not leave a generation irreversibly scarred. This catastrophe has unfolded over time, and we must respond in kind, for as long as there are needs to address.

To help us continue our work once all the others have gone, when the victims of unimaginable horrors – in Somalia or elsewhere – will just be a distant memory, we simply ask you to take part in our one-franc-a-day campaign. This daily gesture, as symbolic as it is effective, consists of donating one franc a day, and only one franc, to ensure the provision of this assistance on a regular and sustainable basis; in other words the basic assistance that no one can refuse to another person in distress. Thanks to this donation, your support will reach people in great need every day. When considered on a daily basis, this miniscule donation may seem ridiculous. But you cannot imagine the importance it has for the victims. [...]

Next to a track linking two villages in northern Somalia, the group of little ragamuffins drag the corpses out of a rut and lie them on the track. They take good care that each body is laid out differently, with a reasonable space between them. Then they retreat to a bank overhanging the scene, crouching down in the African way, feet splayed flat, backside nearly touching the ground. Their little nomad stick is laid across their shoulders, their hands draped over the top of it, at each end. And thus installed, they wait. There's no shade, the sun beats down like lead, only the thorns seem comfortable in the middle of this desert in the Horn of Africa. After a few hours' wait, at last, a vehicle comes into sight. It's just a hazy dot on the horizon. A small cloud of dust, misted by the reflection of the heat rising from the ground. More minutes pass, and we can finally make it out.

On spotting the corpses in the middle of the road, the car stops. A white man and two Somalis get out. They scrutinise their surroundings, alert to the slightest movement in the event of an ambush. Their faces register incomprehension. How the devil did these corpses get here, right in the middle of the track? So they decide to move them back onto the burning sand, to leave the road clear for their four-wheel drive. Watching all this unfold, the children giggle quietly. The white man is particularly interesting, seeing him grimace, heaving and shoving, over these disfigured, raggedy things. Nonetheless, they're disappointed, the aim of the game was not to stop the car.

Once the car had gone, and after making quite sure that the little cloud of dust was sufficiently far away, the little ragamuffins moved their ill-fated playmates back onto the track and returned to the shelter of their hiding place. Minutes, then hours pass. A second car appears. It's a Jeep. At its rear, on a platform, a tripod has been welded on and loaded with a 12/7 machine gun. A Somali, standing up, decked in shades, is riveted to the handlebars of his weapon. His body follows the car's jerks and undulations. His companions are sitting on the sides. There are three people in front. The driver is making the engine shriek. On spotting the 'things' spread out on the ground, the off-road vehicle slows down, to check there are no other dangers around. Then, some 100 metres away from the first corpses, the car picks up speed again. An infernal rally erupts. The desert slalom delights the little naked tykes, who are grinning from ear to ear. The car is through in under one minute, leaving sand and dust behind it, which settles gently back onto the ground.

The ragamuffin children have been playing this game a long time. Probably since cars first appeared in these desert spots. With one difference to the pre-war times: then, they laid stones out on the track. Before the war, they laid out stones.

Of course, I could talk to you again about the men and women dying of hunger, the thousands of children we cannot help due to the limited space in our nutritional centres, because this is what our teams see every day. But it seems to me that this testimony paints a better picture, better than any other reports from the field, of this country's distress. These days, death permeates children's games. These days, Somalia can only survive if we bring it assistance. Concretely, bringing assistance entails feeding and treating, but also doing our best to ensure that life triumphs over death, that over and above the wounds of war and famine, the moral bruises do not leave a generation irreversibly scarred.

Your donation counts because it allows us to save lives right now, and because it provides a glimmer of humanity in this broken country. If this glimmer dies, all hope of seeing Somalia recover its humanity again will be forever lost.
General Siad Barre, the Somali dictator who fell in January 1991, said, "If I go to hell, we're all going to hell." Don't let him be right. He managed to escape, but Somalia's children run a real risk of being dragged into his sinister premonition. If Somali children are to play with stones on the track again, we must all reach out to them. In the name of all those for whom we represent survival and hope, thank you.

Between 15 December and 14 January 1992, MSF conducted an epidemiological survey in Hudur. The results, published in early February, showed a mortality rate that remained seven times higher than normal in a displaced population. MSF renewed its call on public generosity to improve this situation, which remained so critical.

'The Situation in Southern Somalia Continues to be "Extremely Critical", says Médecins Sans Frontières', **AFP** (France), Paris, 4 February 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The health situation in many parts of southern Somalia continues to be "extremely critical" despite the international operation to aid the war-ravaged country, the French humanitarian group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said Thursday.
A survey conducted by an MSF doctor in the Baidoa and Hoddur regions showed a mortality rate seven times higher than in similar situations involving displaced populations, the group said. The daily mortality rate in the month from December 15 to January 14 was 15.8 per 10,000 people, jumping to 46.9 per 10,000 in children up to five, MSF said. Deaths are generally due to malnutrition and illnesses resulting from it, such as diarrhea and respiratory ailments, it said. MSF said the study showed that 26 per cent of the children suffer from malnutrition, 13.6 percent of them from severe malnutrition. MSF said it had sent a four-person team to Kansardhere, west of Baidoa, to take over the nutrition centers in the area that feed about 6,000 children. The French doctors' group renewed its appeal for public help to pursue its action in the Horn of Africa, where it currently maintains a staff of about 100.

On 28 December 1992, Dominique Martin, Programme Manager for Somalia, MSF France, published an editorial in the French daily newspaper, *Libération*. He questioned the figure used by the United Nations to justify the military intervention, according to which 80 per cent of food was being diverted. He denounced the absence of any reaction from the international community to the famine heralded by the war of January 1991 to spring 1992, the operational inadequacies of international organisations, and the failure of the 100-day plan. While recognising that the intervention had facilitated the distribution of aid, he criticised the form it had taken – more police-style than political – which accorded little importance to the social and cultural realities of Somali society.
In the January 1992 issue of *Messages*, MSF France's internal magazine, which was also disseminated to 100 or so French-speaking journalists, the communications

director, who did not agree with Dominique Martin's publication, stated that MSF's Board of Directors hoped that Operation 'Restore Hope' would succeed in terms of humanitarian gains, but the organisation remained concerned about the civilian population's fate.

'The Day the Soldiers Leave Somalia', ***Libération*** (France), Dominique Martin, MSF France Programme Manager, Paris, 28 December 1993 (in French).

Extract:

The audiovisual media, both observer and actor, has given wide coverage to the military-media intervention rolling out in Somalia. The flashes and uniforms on our screens are replaced by emaciated bodies. The event has switched locations, the famine and Somalia are just the background decor of a newly born world order, or disorder, denounced by the same people that created it. [...] The days preceding Operation 'Restore Hope' were full of overwhelming justifications, each more 'self-explanatory' than the next.

First of all, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, stated that according to an authorised source, 80% of aid was being diverted. While the looting of aid happens, and is tragic, no one can seriously support the 80% diversion claim. We know that part of the food was stolen before it got anywhere near Somalia, because the general consensus suggests 'samples' were taken in Kenya. We know that mandatory intermediaries or the local authorities took their cut from this same aid. We also know that more or less organised spates of looting, targeting convoys or warehouses, happened on a regular basis. Nonetheless, this figure of 80% has never been, to our knowledge, at least, put forward in the many coordination meetings held by non-governmental organisations and with the United Nations. The most common figure put forward publicly by aid agencies was closer to 30-40% of food aid being diverted, which is already far too much. Meanwhile, other aid supplies, such as medicines, vaccines, and specialised nutritional products, were never looted.

We have no intention of playing down the gravity of the situation, any more than the intolerable nature of these gangster attacks. The drain on aid budgets, notably those of non-governmental organisations, caused by the security measures needed and the benefits some groups draw from this do not escape our attention, and constitute a major ethical and economic concern for us. That said, whereas 40 per cent of losses could be considered a manageable number and leaves discussion open, 80 per cent, which is so close to the totality, presents a decisive argument for rendering a military intervention unavoidable.

As for the facts put forward by the press, these cannot be flawed: rice could not be unloaded in the Somali capital's port; a World Food Programme boat was bombed. The deterioration of the situation in the weeks leading up to the intervention was glaring, insecurity rose, the main ports were closed and the roads increasingly dangerous. However, it is not enough to observe these facts as if they are just proof without cause. While the responsibility of the Somali warlords is overwhelming, the international community cannot be entirely exonerated from the affair. The total absence of the United Nations, and states, from January 1991 to spring 1992 has without a doubt influenced the current situation. The famine didn't start from one day to the next; it is the consequence of a gradual deterioration that began in early 1991. No serious effort was made at that point to try and resolve the political differences between the country's key figures. And furthermore, the interventions of the United Nations' under-secretary general charged with the affair were a disaster and exacerbated the crisis every time. Back in Somalia, international organisations have revealed their deficiencies in the daily

management of the crisis. These inadequacies were denounced, and rightly so, by Mohamed Sahnoun, Special Envoy of the United Nations' Secretary General, on his resignation.

Operational deficiencies: the plan for accelerated aid, called the '100-day plan,' started in mid-October, is a failure. While insecurity might explain some of the difficulties, the inertia and inappropriate approach of the UN machine with regard to Somali complexities undoubtedly explain the majority of them. The United Nations agencies have spent more energy trying to coordinate themselves internally than producing the results we expect from them, even if UNICEF and the World Food Programme have come out of it better than some.

Policy deficiencies: it would be deeply naive to hope for a global and swift resolution to the conflict. Nonetheless, the permanent control of aid was a task incumbent upon the United Nations. Serious incidents, such as the bombing of a boat at the port of Mogadishu, the machine-gunning of a plane in Bardhere, systematic diversions on the road from Mogadishu to Baidoa, should have become the focus of heightened pressure. Political figures should have demanded sanctions for the guilty parties, and the pitiful excuses of the various leaders should have been publicly denounced. When we state, with reason, that almost all the economic activity of southern Somalia relies on aid, we recognise, while saying it, that we have considerable leverage. Propositions were put forward to the United Nations. We asked, along with others, that basic public services be addressed as a priority: airports, ports, health services, veterinary services, etc. The payment of acceptable and planned salaries at national level should allow a certain stabilisation of the country's social fabric while reinitiating activities in the most vital sectors. These propositions have never been adopted. Will they be in the weeks to come?

By pinpointing where the international responsibility lies, we don't aim to discredit military action as much as support the idea that political action was an option. We are convinced that a strong policy, underpinned by substantial human, material, and financial means, could have toppled the protagonists of this war and reinitiated economic activity. That said, the international community would have needed a coherent global mission in which the threat of a military intervention could have played a role. Most commentaries, even before the military intervention and even more so since, tend to criminalise Somalia and its population. They reduce the image of Somali people to a passive population, starved and besieged by gangsters fearing neither god nor man. Only 14-year-old delinquents would have been ready to take flight at the soldiers' arrival. The forces present were only roving bandits at the beck and call of all-powerful warlords, straight out of the Middle Ages. The population was largely stoned from qat, the drug responsible for so much misfortune in the country. It bears noting that a famous presenter doesn't hesitate to start his live news broadcast with this 'info', showing a sheaf of qat, the symbol of all evils. And thus the Somalis are either poor vagabonds dying of hunger, or young drugged-up delinquents steered by their group leaders. Everything is in place for the police to move in. This vision of Somali society, demonstrating 'objectification' at its worst, is a far cry from the reality. It confuses the condemning of a policy with tragic consequences with the absence of political forces.

The presence of a multinational force changes things momentarily. The distribution of aid is facilitated; from this perspective the operation could be considered a success, even if there are still many problems to settle. Nonetheless, we need to anticipate the departure of the troops and the consequences of their passage, as well as their withdrawal. This massive infusion of military might which brings 'gang chiefs' to their knees and forces them to make pretences at rapprochement is worrying, somehow. This way of going about things is borderline humiliating, in that it implies that the issues

separating these chiefs and pitting them against one another are trifling, and thus strengthens the idea of a police solution, easy to apply and enforce.
The prohibition of qat in zones controlled by the military, such as a port or airport, on the pretext that it is an illicit drug, is another case in hand and can only provoke feisty, indignant reactions from Somalis, who no doubt expected a little more respect for their way of life. There's a major risk of feeling authorised, in the name of a (moral?) duty, to 'interfere' on humanitarian grounds, to impose values and lifestyles. This attitude, questionable on a moral basis in itself, could bite the hand of the ones feeding it by inciting xenophobic reactions. The few incidents recorded in the capital bear weighty testimony to the reality of this xenophobia, ready to emerge when confronted with an overly massive presence of overly noisy strangers. It would be a shame if dubious ideologies alone were awakened in the Somali population, it would be a shame if repeated acts of disrespect led to a strengthening of Islamism, honed to seize propitious occasions to react and manipulate public opinion.
The soldiers of the international force will leave tomorrow or the following day. They will be replaced by those they replaced themselves, the United Nations, with its different agencies and Blue Helmets. This supposes that the military action changes the conditions of the international community's action, either by resolving the political and social problems present in Somalia, or by eradicating the military prowess of the factions and 'gangs'. This also supposes that where the United Nations failed a few months ago, it will succeed in the future. The military intervention, which above all testifies to the failure of the politics that preceded it and which has undoubtedly failed to strengthen the prestige of this institution in worldwide opinion and that of the Somalis, will not facilitate its task. The operation underway represents a total break with the political processes begun these last few months. Even if this break can seem welcome in the short term, it makes the emergence of a sustainable political solution difficult. The competition between the United States and France to meet yesterday's enemies, which testifies above all to interests outside Somalia and pertaining to superpowers alone, is not reassuring either. Whatever the case may be, it's a risky game to play, and it is undoubtedly too early to draw any conclusions. We must monitor how things evolve in the future with care.
Neither the immediate effectiveness of the operation, nor its media coverage, should overshadow the fact that, contrary to what the screen would have us believe, Somalia is a country with a history and a future, and this needs to be taken into account right now, or run the risk of more political failure in the future.

'Somalia', ***Messages*** no. 56 (internal magazine of MSF France), Michel Fiszbin, MSF France Communications Director, January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
This demonstration of the 'right to interfere' – the world's first – will no doubt become a reference point for the 'new world order', for better or for worse. What is beyond a doubt: the immediate emergency, in which hundreds of thousands of people must be saved from certain death. This must take precedence over the legitimate reservations that humanitarian actors cannot help but express, when they are so familiar with this ravaged country and know from experience that the American military bulldozer's passage will have a number of negative repercussions.
Médecins Sans Frontières' Board of Directors hopes that this operation succeeds in terms of humanitarian gains, and MSF will thus cooperate as far as it can with the military forces operating under the United Nations' mandate. We call on all intervening parties

to hear our concerns regarding the civilian populations' fate and what they will become, and ask for them to be considered in this roughly executed episode of history:
• Somalis are not digestive organs waiting to be fed but people, organised in a complex society, which must be respected and efforts be made to assist in its reconstruction, on economic, social, and cultural fronts.
• It is essential to ensure that aid reaches rural areas, and not just the main cities, so as to ensure distribution and population security, and avoid new deadly exoduses towards the urban hubs.
• Humanitarian action must be underpinned by an intense effort on the international community's part to ensure a political solution is found before the troops withdraw, without which the benefits of the operation will be wiped out by a reinitiation of looting and bloody clashes.

'MSF France in Somalia – January 1991-May 1993 – Mission Evaluation – Final **Report**', Virginie Raisson and Dr Serge Manoncourt, 4 February 1994 (in English from French original, translation by Richard Swanson and Eric Bullington).

Extract:
Within the board of directors, MSF's position (not to comment) was so vague that it was understood differently by the program director and the communications director, who released two contradictory articles.

Dominique Martin published an editorial in the daily Libération *that clearly questioned the rationale behind the intervention. It was a really critical piece. He wasn't the official voice of MSF, but he was an important figure in the organisation. I pretty much agreed with what he said. But even if this hadn't been the case, I thought it was a good thing that MSF people expressed themselves when they had a message they could articulate. He didn't tow the party line. On the contrary, the communications director at the time launched a furious attack on Dominique Martin for this editorial. I think he was furious in part because he wasn't informed beforehand, or at least not sufficiently, and in part because he thought the intervention was a success and it shouldn't be criticised. It's true that in the early days, this intervention was glorious. Dominique's editorial came out at the time when George Bush was carrying out a triumphant one- or two-day trip to Somalia, having his photograph taken with Ali Mahdi and Aidid shaking each other's hands, with bags of rice in the background, draped with an American flag. It was really the American triumph in all its glory; peace through the imposition of an invincible armed force. The president paid a visit and obliged these two 'good-for-nothings' to shake each other's hand under the protective power's presence. It was perfect iconography, Doctor Justice, Captain America! In short, this placed Dominique's editorial in a particularly unfavourable context. As a result, it brought it more to light, and really made it stand out.*

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

In early January 1993, MSF international staff rejoined the missions in Somalia, which had been managed by locally hired staff during their absence. The MSF team in Mogadishu questioned the head office on the positions and actions to be taken by the organisation over the coming months, stressing that not holding a position would mean they endorsed the errors committed by the international community.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 8 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: The activity did not stop during the time the teams evacuated and were absent, and they are now rejoining the missions. The roads to the secondary cities are more or less secure, but lack of security is still a real issue in the capital.

'Status Report on Somalia, Early January 1993', **Sitrep**, Nicolas de Metz, MSF France Coordinator, 8 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
What position should MSF take, what line, what actions, and what does the near future hold?
On the eve of the vote of Resolution 794 by the Security Council, we had recommended writing a letter to the Security Council diplomats, but MSF Europe's [lack of] consensus meant this never happened. The letter was not intended, however, as a show of opposition against the intervention, but a warning and short explanation on the reason for humanitarian operations in Somalia. We knew very well that there was a huge chance that the resolution would nevertheless be passed. Since then, the coordinator in Mogadishu has had the opportunity to express his opinion to the media. We have, above all, after discussions with head office, expressed our general concerns: "What do you think? We're worried. And the disarmament? The Somalis definitely need to disarm, but we're worried." [...]
In short, faced with the American and international show, the slowdown of our operations and the growing insecurity raises many questions. MSF reminded the international community that Somalia existed. To get to work in this country, we were forced to make the worst kinds of compromise; high costs for our own protection and the protection of the sites where we were working. These large sums of money surely contributed to funding the war, but would also enable us to keep an active team working in Somalia, and a satellite phone, a small window to the outside world. We finally achieved the desired result; media attention. The UN and others finally took an interest in the fate of this devastated, self-destructive country.
MSF explored the country and found a population dying of hunger. Kouchner took a media-covered trip (redundant) to the country and multiple NGOs rushed to follow in his footsteps. In August-September, the flags of dozens of NGOs flapped in the stinking winds of Baidoa. Food arrived in large quantities but much of it was looted, when it wasn't blocked at the port. The Blue Berets were powerless and an anti-UN sentiment grew. Ambassador Sahnoun was forced to resign by BBG [Boutros Boutros-Ghali].
MSF opened numerous nutritional recuperation programmes while defending the idea with the ICRC that flooding Somalia with food would only provide a temporary solution. Food distribution agencies weren't all prepared for that, nor were they necessarily professional. Some called for military intervention as a solution to the widespread

looting. It was important to fill the Somalis' bellies and scare off hooligans. Until then, MSF worked in equilibrium, albeit a precarious one. Yet, the not-always-calculable danger was avoided. At present, the presence of many foreigners risked reviving the general discontent. Reducing our protection resources does not go together with improving security conditions. Risks of attack exist. A grenade is easier to use and conceal than a 'Mad Max'.

MSF has opened the way for many NGOs and agencies, and will be able to start thinking about being gradually replaced in certain regions and for certain activities (drug supply, etc). MSF has witnessed the events in Somalia for two years. Should we support the actions of the international community, which under the guise of a different mandate, is in the process of committing the same errors made in Cambodia and elsewhere? What can we do to have our voice heard if our many European vocal chords manage to come to an agreement? The debate is ongoing in Mogadishu. What does the central committee think about it? Can the apparatchik François Jean [Director of Studies at the MSF France Foundation] come and help us think about all of this? Furthermore, he might really enjoy contemplating the UN system and its performance.

B. "SHOOT TO FEED"

On 4 January 1993, military sources in Mogadishu announced that Operation 'Restore Hope' would come to an end by 20 January at the latest, to be replaced by an operation supported by the UN, already dubbed 'UNOSOM II' by soldiers. On 22 January, the United States officially asked the Security Council for the UN to take command of UNITAF.

'Operation 'Restore Hope' to be replaced by a UN Operation', **AFP** (France), Samir Douaihy, Mogadishu, 4 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:

On this date, Operation 'Restore Hope', billed as a UN-sanctioned operation under American control, is set to end. An entirely UN-led operation is then set to begin, already called UNOSOM II by the military, these sources have specified. [...] A transitional period is required so that the contingents from the UNOSOM's member countries can gradually replace the American and French troops. The numbers needed for this far longer mission will total around 12,000 to 15,000 soldiers, while for 'Restore Hope', some 30,000 to 40,000 had been planned, say military sources.

The army will be predominantly controlled and composed of Muslim and African troops, while the forces of Operation 'Restore Hope' were mainly Christian and western. Most of the contingents not deployed for Operation 'Restore Hope' and still waiting at the port of Mogadishu will form the core of this new force. These contingents are mainly Botswanan, Saudi, and Moroccan, and will be supported soon by Turkish, Egyptian, Indian, Tunisian, Nigerian, and Australian contingents, the same sources say. The new force will "certainly not" keep the same name, thus clearly marking the changeover from one operation to another.

The American military command is currently extremely concerned by the transitional period and insists on a changeover of command, even a symbolic one, before 20 January, we've been assured. In the field, the current deployment zone division of eight humanitarian sections for 'Restore Hope' forces will be modified. This zone will be divided into four sections, each manned by between 3,000 and 4,000 soldiers. One of these

sections will probably be assigned to the Indian contingent, which will exceed 3,000 soldiers.

'Washington has Asked the UN to Take Command of the Multinational Force', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 22 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Farouk Mawlawi announced to the press that Washington had written to the Security Council inviting it "to swiftly examine the question of an appropriate mandate so that UNOSOM can take control of the multinational forces in Somalia presently under American control". Mawlawi gave no further details.
In an interview with AFP, the US Ambassador Robert Oakley announced that his country wanted the UN to take control of Operation 'Restore Hope' as soon as possible. The UN Representative for Somalia, Ismat Kittani, announced on Monday in New York that a transfer of responsibilities of this kind demanded a new decision by the Security Council, and that "intensive discussions" on the matter were underway.
The UN was reluctant to take control in Somalia because the Blue Berets are traditionally prohibited from firing first if only under potential threat, while the multinational force is authorised to open fire if under threat, as it is a peacekeeping force.

Meanwhile, on 15 January 1993, the Somali factions signed a ceasefire agreement and planned a reconciliation conference for 15 March.

'Ceasefire Agreement between Somali Factions', **AFP** (France), Addis Ababa, 15 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The Somali factions meeting in Addis Ababa signed a ceasefire agreement on Friday, taking immediate effect throughout Somalia. The agreement, signed after 12 days of negotiations, also provides for the disarmament of all armed factions. They also agreed on the forming of a committee of seven members, whose role would be to prepare the agenda for the national reconciliation conference planned for 15 March in Addis Ababa. The committee still needs to identify the criteria for participating in this conference.
In a press release published after the signing ceremony, the 14 factions united under the aegis of the United Nations have invited the Somali National Movement (SNM), in power in the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland, to participate in the reconciliation conference.

In January and February 1993, the number of attacks against humanitarian organisations, which included several murders, increased. Tensions heightened between the UNITAF forces, armed groups, and also the Somali population, demonstrating their hostility to foreign forces ignited by the rise in fatal incidents on civilians.
On 14 January, Kurt Lustenberger, the ICRC delegate in Bardhere, was murdered by looters. The organisation temporarily suspended its activities.

On 6 February, the UN launched a wide-scale operation to distribute food to the Mogadishu population in an attempt to bring down the price of staple items. On the day before the operation, tensions rose in the city.
On 22 February, Valerie Place, a nurse working for the Irish organisation Concern, was killed during an attack on her vehicle by Somalis near Afgoye.

'ICRC Suspends its Activities for Two Days after Delegate Murdered', **AFP** (France), Nairobi, 15 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has decided to suspend all of its operations in Somalia for two days, after the murder of a delegate on Thursday in Bardhere (southwest Somalia), a manager from the organisation announced on Friday in Nairobi.
Kurt Lustenberger, 32, arrived in Bardhere on 22 December for his first overseas mission and was fatally wounded by a bullet to the head, fired by one of three Somali gunmen who came to loot the Red Cross safe. "He was shot just as he was about to hand over the key to the safe," explained Catherine Cazeaux.

'Anti-American Tensions Ahead of a Large Food Distribution Operation', **AFP** (France), Marie Joannidis, Mogadishu, 5 February 1993 (in French).

Extract:
For the first time since their arrival in Mogadishu, the Americans were the target of stones thrown by young overexcited Somalis on Friday, who blame them for the death, that morning, of one of their own who tried to scale the wall of the port occupied by international forces. [...] The Americans failed to hide their anxiety before the hostile crowd who took them to task, just after a convoy passed through which created some excitement, transporting Colonel Warren Helmer from the Marines, who is tasked with liaising with the civilian population and was returning from a meeting with a delegation of the city's prominent citizens. Several military vehicles were hit or had their windshields struck and one of the colonel's aides, a young female officer, received a minor leg injury; only the journalists' vehicles were spared.
The previous day, the Americans announced the death of an 11-year-old boy, killed because he approached a soldier holding a packet that was mistaken for a bomb. These new tensions come the day before the launch of an extensive food distribution operation aiming to feed the entire city population, discourage looting, and bring down prices at the markets.
In the south of Mogadishu, the stronghold of one of the key Somali warlords, General Mohamed Farrah Aidid, confrontations between his supporters and members of the Murusade clan, who fled the war and have returned to reclaim their homes and property, have taken place over the last few days. This "quarrel of the clans", as the Americans see it, deteriorated on Friday, when gunfire was exchanged. Colonel Helmer reported on the inter-clan tensions to the elders and made an appeal to them concerning the important food distribution operations to be carried out in liaison with the NGOs. "We ask you to keep your children off the streets so they can avoid getting injured by the trucks and we would appreciate it if you could help us keep the looters at bay," he said. He stressed that everyone would receive food. "Security and food are very important things," he

added, asking them to tell the children not to touch any grenades, mines, and bombs they came across.

'Launch of "Extensive Food Distribution Operation" in Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Marie Joannidis, Mogadishu, 6 February 1992 (in French).

Extract:
This 'mass food distribution' operation aims to discourage looting and suppress the black market. It will be repeated every day for 90 days, with the exception of Friday, a Muslim public holiday.
The food was distributed at 31 sites chosen in advance, including nine in the northern part of the capital, that is divided in two by a green line separating the clans of rival chiefs Ali Mahdi Muhammad and Mohamed Farrah Aidid. "Our goal is to supply 10 tonnes a day to 5,000 people at 35 sites," Lynn Thomas, who works for the aid organisation CARE, co-organiser of this operation with WFP (World Food Programme), told AFP.

'The Murder of an International Aid Worker, or the Daily Fear in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Jean-Pierre Campagne, Mogadishu, 23 February 1993 (in French).

Extract:
One bullet straight in the heart; another in a lung. Valerie Place, 23, a nurse for the Irish charity Concern, was savagely attacked on Monday by an unidentified gunman on the road between Mogadishu and Baidoa. In January, a member of UNICEF was shot in the back and killed in Kismayo and a manager for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was murdered in Bardhere by Somali looters. Three murders of international humanitarian staff in less than two months: the lack of security in the towns and along the roads is escalating despite the massive peacekeeping mission launched by an international contingent under American command on 9 December [...]
Far from being a secondary phenomenon, this murder is the result of growing insecurity that the American convoys and helicopters are unable to control. "Each individual vehicle becomes a target," explains Mark Mullan. "We need heavy arms to scare assailants off." Since the start of Operation 'Restore Hope', humanitarian organisations, previously protected by escorts as well-armed as their assailants, are no longer guaranteed this protection. "I'm scared driving around now," adds the manager at Concern. "I preferred things during the war. Now there's danger everywhere," says Jeff Loan, a manager at the ICRC. "For the last few days, we've decided not to drive on any of the roads outside the capital. In Mogadishu, we keep movements to a minimum," he adds.

On 26 March 1993, in Mogadishu, US soldiers, feeling threatened by stones thrown at their vehicles, shot into the crowds, wounding children.

'U.S. Soldiers Fire on Crowd, Wound Four', **AFP** (France), Alain Bommenel, Mogadishu, 26 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
A U.S. soldier opened fire on a crowd of Somali civilians who were stoning his jeep here Friday, seriously wounding three children, a spokesman for the U.N. multinational forces said [...] He said the children were "in serious condition, but are expected to live." Minutes earlier another American armored jeep, known as a Humvee, was stoned by the same crowd and a soldier fired a 'warning shot' which ricocheted and wounded another Somali, Roberts said. Roberts said an investigation had been ordered into the incidents, which he said "we regret."
One of the wounded children, a 12-year-old girl was hit by three bullets in the leg and two 13-year-olds were struck in the legs and stomach. The fourth person, whose age was not given, was wounded in the head, he said. The incidents came amid protests over the deployment Friday of 2,200 U.S. Marines to the southern port of Kismayo to prevent renewed fighting between rival factions over control for the town [...]
The foreign forces have often come under attack in Somalia both from armed fighters of the various factions and from hostile crowds of civilians. Thirteen U.S. soldiers have died since the multinational force launched its "Operation Restore Hope" on December 9 to protect aid shipments to millions of Somalis facing starvation as the result of drought and years of civil strife. Two U.S. troops currently face court martial for shooting Somali youths.

The same day, the UN Security Council voted in Resolution 814 and gave its backing to a large-scale peacekeeping operation, dubbed UNOSOM II, which would gradually take over from UNITAF, with 28,000 troops and 2,800 civilian staff. This was one of the biggest operations of its kind ever undertaken by the UN.

'Security Council Approves U.N. Peacekeeping Force for Somalia', **AFP** (France), United Nations, 26 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The Security Council Friday gave the green light to a large-scale U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) set to be phased in to replace the current U.S.-led force. The council unanimously approved the transfer of authority, voting to set up one of the biggest U.N. operations to date, with 28,000 troops, including a U.S. rapid deployment force, in addition to some 2,800 civilian staff.
The council has set October 31, 1993 as the date on which the U.N. mandate in Somalia is to expire, unless the mandate is extended before that time. UNOSOM II gradually will take the reins of the operation from a U.S.-led multinational famine relief force deployed in Somalia in December.

In the following months, the Dutch and French sections of MSF were to close their operations in Somalia. The former could no longer accept the level of insecurity,[13] and the latter could not accept the level of compromise they were forced to submit to in order to carry out operations. The Belgian section was subject to as much pressure as its counterparts, but agreed to maintain, at all costs, its programmes in Kismayo.

1. MSF Holland: "The Level of Insecurity is No Longer Acceptable."

During the night of 27-28 February 1993, the MSF Holland team in Baidoa was attacked by its own armed guards. The coordinator was threatened with death if he did not leave the country, while the Somali administrator was beaten and US$20,000 was looted. Subsequently, eight international staff were evacuated. The mission's protection was then temporarily provided by UNITAF's Australian forces. Initially, wishing to give their staff time to inform their families and find a solution in the field, MSF Holland did not report the incident. But once the report was broadcast on national TV, a press release was finally issued on 2 March, exposing the organisation's fears concerning the deteriorating situation in Baidoa.

Fax from MSF Holland Coordinator in Baidoa to MSF Holland Emergency Desk, 3 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
On 27-02-1993 at 22.00 hrs everybody was spread around the compound. Some still working, some socialising in various places of the MSF office-home compound. There were 5 armed guards present, four of them were on night duty and one came from a different compound. They collected the whole team and the local nurse Abbas, who also lives on the compound. We were all put into the room of Abbas and Mohamed, the cook, with an armed guard in the door. Abbas was used as a translator.
We were told that no harm would be inflicted upon us if we would do what they ordered us to do. Further it was stated that the reason for this action was the fact that the coordinator was a very bad person as he had dismissed guards and decreased wages from some of the guards. The logistic coordinator (Arjo) was taken out of the room together with Abbas. Arjo was forced to open the safe, which was situated in the store room and contained USD 2,500. Another USD 10,000 in local currency was kept in a metal trunk in the radio room and also taken by them.
We had all this money in the house, because the next day it would be pay-day. The robbers knew that there had to be another USD 10,000 in the house. In fact this money was changed through a channel that the robbers were not aware of a few days before and was kept at the airport with the UTF forces. When the robbers asked for more money, Arjo gave them his own money, an amount of US$7,500, which he kept in his room. No physical violence was used against Arjo.
He was brought back in. Another speech was made in which again it was stated that especially the coordinator (and to some extent also the logisticians) were to be blamed for mismanagement and because of that they had to kill the coordinator. I was taken into the radio room (with Abbas) and further questioned about the location of the

13. MSF Holland nevertheless remained in Somaliland.

remaining money. I told them I did not know. I was asked to prove in the books that my statements were correct. I have not dealt with the bookkeeping at all in this project and I am not very good at it. I could only tell them that I was not able to do this. During this, the chief of the guards shouldered his rifle several times and told me in an aggressive way he would kill me (apparently, this was the only English he knew). Each time this happened, Abbas dove into a corner, shaking all over.

Eventually I was brought back into the room with the others. The next to be taken out was Jonathan, the logistician. He was only taken out for a short time, his room was searched and no violence was used against him. The coordinator was taken out of the room again and I was faced with my suitcase, which I had to open and each item was searched through. During this, a gun was put against my head (temple). When nothing was found, I was brought back into the room with the others. They were out for another 15 minutes (except for one, keeping an eye on us), in which they probably searched through the rest of the compound. In the meantime, the cook Mohamed came in after an outing in the town. He was thrown into the room with us.

Abbas was taken out of the room by himself and further questioned. He was thrown against the wall and on the ground several times. Then the head of security gave another speech. He stated that we would be kept in the room until 7 o'clock in the morning and that I had to leave on the first possible flight out tomorrow morning. Drinks were brought in and we were told to use the corner of the room as a toilet. We were not allowed to speak, or leave the room. They all left the room. We did not know if they had actually left the compound so we did not dare to venture out. At 02:00 hrs somebody knocked on the gate, so we knew that the robbers had left.

The UTF forces were notified immediately. It took them 25 minutes (!) to reach us. They took over the security of the compound. Everything was searched through, but we had the impression that no other things were taken. Further I would like to add the following remarks:

The behaviour of the team was excellent. Nobody broke down, which could easily have led to a more dangerous situation.

Abbas is completely free of any blame in this incident. He has a long history with MSF and was completely shaken up. It was decided that he would also fly out with the team the next day, because his position became too vulnerable in Somalia.

The accusation that I was a bad person is a result of several happenings taking place in the recent weeks. The most important problems for the Somalis was that I brought down the number of armed security guards from 97 to 79. I also brought down the wages for about 40% of the guards so they would all be on the same level. These persons went down in salary from SSh. 1,375,000 [Somali shilling; equivalent at the time to a decrease from US$275 to US$180]. For your information a nurse has a salary of SSh. 700,000 [US$140). I decreased the numbers, because in my opinion there were too many of them. It is not a good policy to need a standing army over which we have no control and which can blackmail us on any given moment. I also tried to make regular guards out of bandits. Apparently, this does not work in Somalia.

In general I would like to make the following statement:

Under a brutal and despotic regime the Somalis lost the values that had sustained them since time immemorial, their love of freedom, egalitarian, justice, fair play, familial, societal, and religious values. Today the Somalis are reduced to an orgy of blood-letting and a senseless civil war that pitches one clan against the other.

The peacekeeping forces remain impotent in a country that has lost the last vestiges of civil order. Is it reasonable that we should enter into talks with rebel movements and individuals that have degenerated to the level of thugs, robbers, armed assassins, and blackmailers?

This report was not easy for me to write. Hope to hear from you today.
Pieter.

'Re: Press Release in Somalia', **Fax** from MSF Holland, Department of Communication to all MSF Sections and Offices, 2 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
Dear all,
For your information: Herewith a press release MSF Holland distributed today. This press release is, in principle, only meant for THE DUTCH PRESS! Last weekend, the MSF team was robbed in Baidoa. Because the team wanted to contact their families first, we did not issue a press release on Sunday. And, now we were in fact waiting for another moment to send a press release – when some things/solutions to the problems would become clearer, maybe at the end of this week. But the national TV news heard about the evacuation by coincidence and they planned to bring it 'big' in the news tonight. Therefore we decided to issue this release ourselves today. By this, we hope that we can keep the number of sensational stories limited, and let a more 'positive' message be heard. This press release is therefore a kind of 'damage control', so we suggest that this release will only be distributed in Holland.

'MSF Fears Further Deterioration of the Security Situation in Baidoa', MSF Holland **Press Release**, Amsterdam, 2 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
MSF is fearing a further deterioration of the security situation in Somalia. The UN is not able to guarantee the safety of relief organisations. Last weekend the team of MSF Holland in Baidoa was robbed.
The security situation in Somalia seems to slip to the level of before the US intervention. Therefore, in among others, Kismayo, Merka, and Baidoa, the necessary extension of the aid cannot take place. The UN in Somalia is responsible for protection of the relief organisations but, the means of the UN are not sufficient. MSF Holland and other relief organisations are, at this moment, negotiating with the UN in Baidoa.
Last weekend (Saturday night) the house of MSF Holland was robbed.
The eleven team members were taken hostage for one hour. The robbers left with a large amount of money and personal belongings of the team. MSF Holland has evacuated seven team members temporarily to Kenya. The remaining team members and the local staff are continuing the programme of MSF Holland in Baidoa. Australian UN guards are at this moment, protecting the MSF compound.
MSF Holland is the only organisation in Baidoa providing large-scale medical aid. Daily in health-posts and nearby feeding centres, about 800 patients are treated for among other things, malaria, diarrhoea and scabies. And, in a field hospital, 40 people are being treated. In Baidoa, 60,000 people are living, of which about 40,000 displaced.

I left in February. I was totally burnt out. I needed to go for a month to a psychologist. I saw too much killing, too many dead children. I was under constant fighting for too long. It was my first war experience. I was home for five days or so when on the radio they said that humanitarian people had been taken hostage in Baidoa by their own guards. It was my team with my replacement, a guy who did not have a lot of experience. When he

went there, one of the first things he did, which was a very stupid move, was that he lowered the salaries of the guards.
I had extremely good contact with my guards. At night, I would sit with all of them with a translator and make jokes. And I knew them and talked with them because they were protecting our lives – and they could have easily turned around their guns. When I left, I was very proud that the leader said, 'it is a pity that you're leaving because now we feel like orphans.' So when my replacement said, 'we are going to lower your salaries,' the guards, said. 'oh really?' And, they sat everybody down and opened the safe and took everything. I heard this later because I was already very disturbed and this was too disturbing for me.

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Coordinator in Baidoa, November 1992-February 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

On 16 March 1993, MSF Holland issued a press release announcing that its team in Baidoa was once again complete and working under the direct protection of UNITAF's Australian forces. But a month later, on 26 March, one of the armed guards hired by the team to protect the hospital was shot down by a UNITAF Australian soldier.

'Protection by United Nations' Soldiers – Somalia: the Médecins Sans Frontières Team in Baidoa Complete Again', MSF Holland **Press Release**, 16 March 1993 (in Dutch).

Extract:
The MSF team in the town of Baidoa, in Somalia, is once again full. Some members were evacuated to Kenya following an attack perpetrated a few weeks earlier. The return of the aid workers is justified by the fact that security is now provided by Australian UN troops, who stand guard at the MSF office/house. The team was attacked on the night of 26 February and a section of the team was temporarily evacuated. The four members who stayed behind continued to give medical aid to the Baidoa population working with local personnel. Today, the team has eight members. The situation is presently calm in Baidoa, but outside the town, security conditions remain worrying. Consequently, the plan to increase aid for the region of Baidoa has been temporarily postponed.
In Baidoa, Médecins Sans Frontières is the only organisation providing large-scale medical aid. Every day, in the polyclinics and feeding centres, some 800 patients are treated for diarrhoea, respiratory problems, malaria, and scabies. Furthermore, MSF has built a mobile hospital, in which 30 severely ill patients receive care. Today, Baidoa is home to 60,000 people, of whom 40,000 have been displaced.

Somalia **Sitrep** 6, MSF Holland, 26-28 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
On the evening of 26-3-93 one of our security guards in OPD1 was shot dead by an Australian soldier. According to Major Stanhope of the Australian forces, the incident happened as follows:

Around 17.00h an Australian foot patrol had a look at the situation at the well directly behind our OPD to investigate rumours that our OPD security guards were charging money to people collecting water at the well. They also visited the OPD without any problems. Around 22.25h another patrol went to the same well to have another look at the situation. Whilst some members of the patrol were talking through an interpreter to the people at the well, one of the soldiers looked over the wall of the OPD, using a rather strong torch to check out their area of operation. He saw two men present, one of them reached under a bed, produced a gun and pointed it at the soldier. The soldier yelled at him several times in Somali to stop, then fired some shots and got cover behind the wall into the compound. He heard the impact of some bullets on the other side of the wall and there upon, threw a hand grenade. Half of the patrol went to the front gate to go inside the compound. They found the gate closed and threw in another hand grenade before climbing the wall into the compound. They searched the compound, heard some noise of probably somebody climbing the wall to get out. They gathered at the front gate to make a more thorough search of the compound. On doing so, a man came out of the OPD building with a shouldered weapon walking around. He was shot at and died.
By that time, the already alarmed quick reaction force arrived at the compound, fired two flares to illuminate the area, and threw a third hand grenade in the compound. There was still some shooting going on in that stage. After they ceased fire, the compound was searched. A woman was found and taken for interrogation. The gun of the killed man was still hot.
The morning after the incident, the head of security of the OPD and the other guard went to the airport with Jean-Marc and Jonathan to talk to the Australians. The guard admitted that he had fired his gun. It was not clear to them that they were dealing with the Australians.
The man killed was: Mohamed Adan Ali employed by MSF as guard of OPD 1. He leaves behind two wives and six children. This afternoon I talked to his brother and clan elder. We will pay SSh 2,000,000 [US$400] for the funeral, assist them in getting "financial compensation from the Australians", try to find a job within MSF for one of the guard's wives and attend the ceremony tomorrow.

'Australian Troops Shoot Dead Somali', **Reuters** (UK), 27 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
Australian troops shot dead a Somali after they came under fire near the compound of the aid group Médecins Sans Frontières in the central town of Baidoa, a U.S. military spokesman said on Saturday. "They returned fire and one Somali was killed and an Australian wounded, although not seriously," he said.

On 23 April 1993, the Dutch media announced, via a source in Mogadishu, that MSF Holland was planning to withdraw from Baidoa. The operation was terminated on 26 April. It was publicly announced on 3 May in a press release.

Fax from Jules Pieters, Desk, and Hans Joosten, Press Officer, MSF Holland to Arjo Berkhout and Arjan Hehenkamp, MSF Holland, Nairobi and Mogadishu, 23 April 1993 (in English).

Extract:
Good Morning,
In a few Dutch media this morning: MSF HOLLAND is considering withdrawing from Baidoa (source Reuters in Mogadishu).
Contents: Baidoa dangerous again
MSF Holland is considering withdrawing from Baidoa because of the rising violence in the town. These last days several acts of violence took place. 5 Somalis working for several NGOs were killed, and a CARE nurse was killed on Tuesday. MSF team is regularly threatened by bandits who are looting warehouses. MSF is withdrawing if the security situation isn't improved. Also, an American organisation is considering closing its medical centre in the town. UNITAF will increase patrols.
That's all!
IMPORTANT: With this news in the media, it is important that we have ONE spokesperson, and not several people who always will have a slightly different story.
Therefore: ALL JOURNALISTS (including the ones in Nairobi) SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE AMSTERDAM OFFICE. Jules Pieters will be dealing with all press.
This means that we will not let journalists call with Baidoa (what they certainly will like to do). In each interview we will stress:
• We are considering withdrawing if the security situation doesn't improve. At this moment, we are negotiating on that with parties involved (UN/clans). Negotiations will take at least one week.
• It is not the first time that we consider withdrawing. After the robbery where team members were taken hostage (last weekend of Feb) we also considered withdrawing. But better security arrangements could be made at that time, but now the situation is getting worse.

'Somalia: Security Conditions No Longer Acceptable in Baidoa – Médecins Sans Frontières Suspends its Aid Programme', **Press Release**, MSF Holland, Amsterdam, 3 May 1993 (in Dutch).

Extract:
Security conditions in the Somali town of Baidoa have risen to unacceptable levels for Médecins Sans Frontières. Threats to the MSF compound continue to rise. The organisation has therefore made the decision to suspend the aid programme in Baidoa indefinitely. Meanwhile, the 10 members of the team have been evacuated to Kenya.
Guaranteeing the security of aid workers in Baidoa 24/7 is an impossible task for the UN's Australian troops. Last month, the MSF team regularly received death threats and there is sufficient cause to take these threats seriously. Dialogue with the different parties has not helped to improve the security conditions. For this reason alone, the decision was made to transfer a portion of the team to Nairobi a fortnight ago. Médecins Sans Frontières will resume its aid programme if the security conditions improve.
In Baidoa, Médecins Sans Frontières has been the victim of violent acts on several occasions. In late February, the team was robbed and taken hostage by its own security guards. And two weeks ago, a Somali nurse working for MSF was killed at her home. The rising insecurity in Baidoa is a direct consequence of the fact that, until now, the political branch of the UN-led intervention (UNOSOM) has not been in a position to create an

effective foundation for peace in Somalia. This should have been ensured by the establishment of a peacekeeping force and the restoration of justice.
Médecins Sans Frontières has provided medical assistance in Baidoa since September 1992. Every day, the polyclinics and feeding centres provided treatment to some 800 patients for diarrhoea, respiratory problems, malaria, scabies, and other illnesses. Furthermore, Médecins Sans Frontières had set up a mobile hospital to treat severely ill patients. Today, Baidoa is home to 60,000 inhabitants, of whom 40,000 have been displaced. In Baidoa, Médecins Sans Frontières employed around 250 Somali workers, most of whom were trained by the medical personnel.

I can't remember how many times I had to go to Baidoa and discuss with the team. It's clear that I felt more unsafe after the military intervention than before. Everything was completely out of balance and the military did not know how to deal with the Somalis. The Americans were completely stupid. They didn't know how to handle the matter. Then the Australian Army became responsible for the Baidoa area. One day, some commander decided to disarm our guards. It was a mistake of course. Later on, they returned the weapons but it caused a lot of friction and anger among the Somali guards. Yet, I think the Australians were one of the best armies. They learned quickly. The interaction between the Australian Army and MSF in the Baidoa area was ok. They assisted us but they kept a distance. Then people from MSF were taken hostage for two days and the Australian Army had to protect the compound. Later on when we were attacked by a Somali faction, they protected the compound because there was no alternative. Soon after, we left because it was not a workable situation anymore.

Jules Pieters, MSF Holland, Emergency Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in English).

2. MSF France: Distancing from Military-Humanitarianism

On 10 February 1993, the MSF France operations managers acknowledged that the teams were restricted by the security parameters enforced by the military.
On 24 February, the MSF France coordinator for the Horn of Africa called for a press conference to condemn the loss of human life caused by Operation 'Restore Hope'. In the field, the team witnessed the emergency phase of the food crisis come to an end, along with its programmes, while security continued to deteriorate. It also noted that MSF was not present in places where the needs were greatest. It wondered what other places MSF had worked in contexts completely dictated by a military-humanitarian operation and rackets such as those in Somalia? A visit from the general director and the programme manager was expected.
At its meeting on 5 March, MSF France's Board of Directors debated the question of maintaining or potentially removing the teams from Somalia when the security conditions were deteriorating and the feeding centres emptying, the peak of the famine having passed.

Minutes of Meeting of the Department of Operations, MSF France, 10 February 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: Security is deteriorating. The security perimeters are set out by the military. Outside these perimeters, the situation is catastrophic. MSF is attempting to resolve the problem by hiring guards. But we are being increasingly drawn into secure areas by the armed forces, a restriction that is difficult to accept. We need to see if there is a difference between these zones and review the actions of other agencies.

Fax from Thierry Durand, MSF France Coordinator for the Horn of Africa, to Dominique Martin, Programme Manager, Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, Emergency Coordinator, Brigitte Vasset, Director of Operations, and Rony Brauman, President of Board of Directors, MSF France, 24 February 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Hi everyone,
Today I want to warn you about the situation in Somalia. Sean Devereux, Kurt Lustenberger, Valerie Place, and dozens of Somali humanitarian workers have paid with their lives for their dedication to Somalia and 'the restoration of a safe humanitarian environment in the country'.
Three months after a military intervention supposed to re-establish secure humanitarian operations in Somalia, three people were left dead. There could have been 30, that wouldn't change anything. Some 30,000 men were deployed on Somali soil, elite troops patrolling under the avid eye of cameras, showing a unique kind of arrogance towards the Somalis, entrenched at night in fortified camps, at the cost of US$80 million with their objective of 'zero [aid] losses'.
The aid agencies are disarmed, helpless in the face of crime that is only getting worse, their members now sitting ducks, victims of the hatred against foreigners that has taken hold in Somali society, in danger of violent death at the slightest move. Today the Operation 'Restore Hope' is a delusion, a failure that can only be measured against the number of funerals that have ensued. Tomorrow it will be our turn to mourn for one of us. We need to act, to react.
I think that we need to hold a major press conference on the subject, show people what's going on behind the reassuring figures and hot images of strapping Texan guys. We need to act quickly. Decisively.

'**Activity Report** December 1992, January/February 1993, MSF Mogadishu, Somalia', Brigitte Doppler, Isabelle Fournier and Clemens Vlasich, MSF France, March 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Conclusion
Since the start of Operation 'Restore Hope', the food situation has been improving. Food distributions are going better and covering more areas. As far as we're concerned, it's time to clarify our action in Somalia:
- We have come out of the other side of the emergency.
- The food distribution programme is coming to an end.
- Our programmes have entered the routine phase.

- It is increasingly difficult to carry out our everyday work due to the lack of security and the military environment.
- We are not present in places where the needs are the most important (Khansardere, Brava, and Sablale).

The safety of our aid teams, meanwhile, is deteriorating. The fragile balance that was until now essentially based on the power of certain clans (sub-clans) that we have worked with since the start cannot continue now that these same clans have seen their authority reduced to nothing. You only need to add up the number of incidents that have happened since 9 December to know this is the case. Three expatriates have been killed since the start of the operation, all three murdered in zones 'protected' by troops. Furthermore, the presence of troops in certain areas has created, just as we thought, 'insecure zones', such as Khansardere, Brava [and] Sablale.

Anti-American sentiments have heightened in Mogadishu. It seems that after three months of intervention, it is difficult to separate ourselves, and in the collective unconscious the much-dreaded amalgam NGO/UN/UNITAF is becoming clearer (we are all 'white skinned' in the same clan), especially since the events on 26 February when our guards told us quite clearly that we were all lumped in with the Americans.

Politically speaking, nothing is resolved. The 2nd reconciliation conference held in Addis Ababa in mid-March reassured nobody: the Habr Gedirs (USC/Aidid) are more and more unwanted in the zones they assigned to themselves during the war, the SDM in Baidoa seems to want to break away from the SNA and become regionally autonomous. In Kismayo for the last month, the SPM and SNF have been razing the town to dust right under the noses of the Belgian and American troops. In Galkayo, the confrontations between SSDF [Somali Salvation Democratic Front] and USC continue under the shadow of foreign troops.

Do we have a place in Somalia today, a country where everything is orchestrated by the armed forces and UNOSOM on the one hand, and the Somali racket on the other? And if yes, how and which actions in particular?

The visit by Dominique Martin and Bernard Pécoul [General Director] should find answers to these questions following meetings with the different coordinators in the field and in the capital as well as with other representatives of other sections.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 5 March 1993 (in French).

Extract:

Protecting teams in Somalia

The figures yielded by the recent mortality surveys are alarming: in Baidoa, 70% of children under five died between May and November 1992. Following the history of MSF's action in Somalia, presented by Marc Gastellu[-Etchegorry], Dominique Martin gave a breakdown of the current situation:

- Health coverage is shrinking while insecurity is increasing.
- It's impossible to know what the needs are, any movement outside the feeding centres being denied for security reasons; 2,000 children are currently in our feeding centres compared to 15,000 earlier, although we don't have the means to assess the reasons for this drop in numbers.
- Tensions have heightened, particularly towards guards, with whom it's now impossible to negotiate, the MSF Holland team was threatened by its guards without any possibility of intervention.

- Travel by teams is increasingly dependent on the military, whose effectiveness is all relative and whose presence in the field is uncertain in terms of duration. The guards are also getting confused, which is contributing to the breakdown in relations.
- Confusion too in the Somali population towards both the NGOs and the military, more and more foreigners being increasingly rejected.

With all these points considered, it seems that space within which NGOs have the freedom to operate has been considerably reduced. The question of whether to keep teams in the field has been raised and an analysis of the situation is needed if we are to be able to decide on whether to maintain our presence or potentially withdraw. Marc Gastellu highlighted the difficulty of making this kind of decision:

- 2,000 children are currently at our feeding centres,
- A departure could have serious consequences on other NGOs, and the guards won't be happy about losing a source of income.
- MSF still has real clout in Somalia in terms of interventions and advice.

Catherine Damesin [Finance Director] reminds us that in the eventuality of a withdrawal, the fundraising campaigns carried out on behalf of Somalia will oblige us to testify, putting the NGOs remaining in the field in even more danger. Dominique Martin believes that the question of security for other NGOs is a fundamental point, but independent from the question of giving evidence. Jean-Christophe Rufin [Board member] says that throughout the press, the military operation in Somalia is considered a success, it might perhaps be useful to communicate to relativise this opinion while staying in the field. Rony Brauman believes that communication is not simple concerning the question of the military operation; like Brigitte Vasset, [Director of Operations] he feels that while the aim to disarm the different factions has been unsuccessful, food distribution has had positive consequences on the population.

From 8-12 March 1993, Bernard Pécoul, MSF France's General Director, and Dominique Martin, MSF France's Programme Manager, were visiting the missions in Mogadishu, Hudur, and Wajid. They met all the teams and the managers from other MSF sections and other NGOs and obtained a status report on needs, programmes, and security issues. A decision was made to implement a programme disengagement process over two months, with a handover to other NGOs.

'Somalia: Visit from 8 to 12 March 1993', **Report** by Bernard Pécoul, MSF France General Director, and Dominique Martin, MSF France Programme Manager (in French).

Extract:

Objectives of visit:

- Check with the teams if security conditions are adequate to satisfy health and food needs.
- Review the question of our 'dependence' in light of recent developments.
- Redirect the mission in accordance with the information collected.

We met with the following:

- The gang leaders of Irish Concern, the ICRC, and SCF.
- The warlords of MSF Belgium, MSF Holland, and MSF Spain.
- We were able to visit Mogadishu, Hudur, and Wajid.

• Hervé, the doctor from Merca, came to Moga and accompanied us throughout the visit.
• We met the Kansardhere team in Nairobi.

On Friday 12th, we had a general meeting with at least one representative from each mission, the current coordination team, plus Nicolas [de Metz] and Brigitte [Doppler]. François Enten was also there with Gilles Izard. Thierry [Durand] and Marie-Christine took part in Nairobi.

After the analysis and observations made *in situ* the days before, the discussion largely centred on the possible alternatives, i.e.

• Maintaining our presence with some changes
• Fast (or immediate) withdrawal
• Gradual withdrawal (over three months)
• Partial withdrawal with redeployment.

<u>The following issues were discussed:</u>

• Reduction of needs: The food emergency is behind us. The number of children in the feeding centres dropped from 15,000 in October to 3,000 in March (of which 90 per cent are on the way to recuperating). Mortality rates fell in most areas and are bordering on 21/10,000/day. The change happened quickly. This can be explained by the after-effects of high mortality, by the displacement of populations returning to their villages and places of origin, and by the significant improvement of their nutritional status due to the combined effect of food aid, good harvests and nutritional assistance.
• Insecurity: There is a lot to say over the last few weeks! On the one hand the teams have the feeling that they are less and less in control of their security. The situation is different depending on the location: Hudur and Wajid are safe, Kansardhere and Moga are not. The least safe places are, it seems, the places where needs are greatest.
• Dependence: This subject is linked to the previous one. Our dependence on the Somalis is nothing new, but it is less acceptable insofar as the needs have declined. Our dependence on the military is growing every day, which everyone is condemning.
• Cost/benefit: Expenditure is continuing at the same rhythm as last year, whereas needs have reduced. This can be partially explained by the difficulty in laying employees off because of the risks this might incur! The cost of treating a malnourished person doubled, at least, between September and February.

After discussing each proposal and evaluating the potential consequences, the following decisions were made:

• A fairly quick departure (two months maximum), while handing over the programmes to other NGOs.
• Evacuation in the event of a problem with the 'disengagement' of our guards or the laying off of other employees (we employ 800 people there).

In real terms this means:

• Hudur: Team cut by half within a fortnight. Contacts with interested organisations (Samaritans, Concern, MDM [Médecins du Monde] Greece).
• Wajit: Closure within a fortnight. Transferred to Greeks mentioned above.
• Kansardhere: The team is not going back. We will continue to oversee things remotely, to pay the employees and supply equipment/materials before we leave.
• Merca: Cut the team by half. We won't go back to Brava/Sablale except to pay people and for the Unimix.
• Moga: Status quo for the moment. This is the most significant area in terms of disengagement, withdrawals from the periphery likely to lead to repercussions.

Part of the teams will be replaced by 'negotiators' including Nicolas and probably Brigitte. The medical coordinator position has been removed. Clemens will handle some of the negotiations. Everyone is aware of the risks of this kind of operation. So we have to be as discreet as possible regarding this decision, and monitor how the situation develops day to day. Any incident will be evaluated with the team and could enforce an evacuation. Any people concerned, whether in the field, in Nairobi, or in Paris, will keep monitoring this situation closely and intervene if necessary.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 26 March 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia, by Dominique Martin
Bernard Pécoul and Dominique Martin went to Somalia for a week and met with most of the teams to discuss the options for leaving Somalia. The decision was made to close the mission, largely justified by the very significant fall in mortality and the desertion of the feeding centres, consequences of the high death rate over previous months, the return of the populations to the villages, and the impact of international aid.
The issue of dependency on both the armed guards and military forces was also discussed. For strategic reasons concerning handover and security as regards us and other NGOs, our departure will take place in around six weeks. At the moment, the situation is calm across Somalia and negotiations are underway in Addis Ababa.

There was a succession of incidents and more and more serious problems in 1993, which ultimately highlighted the mortal dangers of militarisation in this context. We decided that we were prevented from taking further action, that staying in the environment imposed by the UN was making us a cog in the military-humanitarian machine, and making us complicit in its historic gaffes and those inevitably ahead of us. There was nothing to do but leave. The purpose of announcing and deploying this departure was to show our protest against the UN's methods and our determination not to be associated with them. Bernard isn't going there to make the decision but rather to explain it or maybe to verify it, to take a 'final tour of duty'. The decision to leave has therefore been taken not following a deliberate, meticulous and detailed examination of the field, but following a general assessment of what we described at the time as a bloody fiasco and our desire not to be associated with it. However, we want to manage our relations with the Somalis, because we want to believe, after all, that we are not done in Somalia.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

In April 1993, in the *Messages* newsletter, distributed to a hundred or so media, the president of MSF France discussed the confusion made between the roles of aid workers and the soldiers deployed by the UN in regions where the organisation has operations.

'Médecins Sans Frontières and the UN: Between Us, It's Ambiguous', Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, ***Messages*** no. 59 (internal magazine of MSF France), April 1993 (in French).

Extract:

Cambodia, El Salvador, Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Mozambique, Iraq, Angola: the list of devastated countries where MSF's teams have learned to work alongside the UN or international military forces deployed under the blue flag is long. International police, humanitarian army, observation forces, peacekeeping troops or temporary authority, the objective is relatively ambitious, the deployment relatively massive, and the mandate always vague. The New World Order exists; we have seen it. Even though deciding on its true nature might seem presumptuous: is it a new paradigm of secular strife between nations and rival interest groups, or the slow and chaotic advent of control by the law of human passions?

Whether you see History as a chronology of advancements (the optimistic version) or as the chronicle of the noise and fury of men (the tragic version), you will adopt one or the other of these perspectives. However, beyond making a global assessment of the significance of this phenomenon, we need to rethink our action in accordance with this new presence and the changes to the landscape that ensue. That in Somalia, French, Belgian, and American troops have chosen to set up base in regions where humanitarian organisations of the same nationalities are carrying out operations is not irrelevant. That these troops proclaim to be fulfilling a humanitarian mission while engaging in proper military operations is what is quite frankly problematic, and not only in principle.

It is the relations between the teams and local interlocutors, the perception the population we are trying to help and work with, and naturally their security that are seriously jeopardised in such conditions. Different contexts and challenges, same problems: In Bosnia, all the international field staff there are aware of it, the Blue Berets and the NGOs are totally identified as one and the same, who are also transformed insidiously into subcontractors of the UN or European Community agencies. In both cases, our margin of manoeuvre, and therefore our capacities to act and make decisions, are reduced to nothing. In Somalia, we have questioned the idea of pursuing a mission whose risks seem disproportionate to the real benefits we can bring the population.

Furthermore, in a relatively calmer context, as in Cambodia, more than the vice it would represent for the NGOs, it is the scale of the UN intervention and the impact of its secondary effects on a society in precarious balance that need to be weighed against the results. The conclusion is far from exhilarating. In El Salvador, however, support from the United Nations has undoubtedly helped the country find its way to peace more rapidly. But what can we make of the international community's total disinterest in Burma, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, the Caucasus, and the majority of Sudan?

Our relations with the United Nations are complex, ambiguous; sometimes hampered by their presence, we are always frustrated by their absence. And so it is urgent, if we are to find our place in this new context, to think in concrete terms about what we expect and what we fear. The General Assembly and the second Populations in Danger report should represent important opportunities to give this matter due consideration.

On 4 May 1993, the final programmes run by MSF France in Mogadishu were officially closed, following a gradual withdrawal that the section managers deemed positive. One coordinator remained in the field until June to close the last mission, in Hudur, assess the other missions and relations with UNOSOM,

and identify other potential zones to explore. An assessment of the entire Somalia mission was planned.
Carried out as an in-depth evaluation of the mission, it would be published in February 1994.[14]

Minutes of Meeting: 'Assessment of the Disengagement from Somalia and perspectives', Dominique Martin, MSF France Programme Manager, 19 May 1993 (in French).

Extract:
1) Report: Re-reading of the discussion in Nairobi in light of recent events, our departure from Somalia was intended to free us from the MSF paradigm, i.e. the 800 employees, including an armed section, and the UN operation, to gain our independence, and the famous humanitarian space. The experience showed that contrary to our concerns, it was possible to adapt our paradigm, at least outside of Mogadishu, based on our activity, without violent repercussions. This reality is to the credit of MSF's effective implantation in Somalia (seniority, but also clear relations with staff, quality of expats in the field, etc). A partial disengagement would probably have been possible from the point of view of security. The decision was not challenged, however.
MSF's departure is a signal to the aid community. How far and how was it heard? The news was 'passively' broadcast in the French media (papers, radio). An institutional communication (all UN agencies, governments, funders) is preferable. It should be based on a current assessment supported by the most recent events. This should be done as quickly as possible (June).
Past actions: Overall, it was felt that the discussions were led correctly. There was criticism that there was some delay in organising the field visit, but nobody thought that maybe we needed this time for the situation to mature. It would have been better if Bernard and/or Dominique had had the time to return to the field after making the decision to explain it to their teams. The choice of people could have been wider to represent the missions more effectively.
Since the military intervention in December, the coordinators had trouble moving about between missions, which the teams complained about. The decision to withdraw prompted visits to the field. The disengagement started straight off the bat and then had to be slowed down to carry out the handover, where possible, in the best conditions.
Kansardhere is the poor parent of the Somalia mission, also with regard to the disengagement. Hudur is the final mission in activity. It should be taken over by MDM Greece; we're awaiting confirmation. They themselves are waiting for the answer from the EC on their funding request. In practice, we have until the end of the first week of June to receive an answer from the Greeks. In addition, we will begin a gradual disengagement that will give the hospital as much chance as possible in terms of viability. [The coordinator] is in charge of processes.
2) The future: Jean-Hervé [Bradol, MSF France Field Coordinator in Somalia] gave a presentation of the northeast and Somaliland (see his report). [...] To summarise, in the northeast the health situation is bad but not catastrophic; we need to put follow-up programmes in place. Security is average due to robbery. The region of Galkayo could be explored. In Somaliland, security is poor and possibilities to work limited. MSF Holland is there. [The coordinator] will stay until late June with the following objectives:
- Close the Hudur mission

14. 'MSF France in Somalia – January 1991-May 1993 – Mission Evaluation – Final Report', by Virginie Raisson and Dr Serge Manoncourt, 4 February 1994 (in English from French original, translation by Richard Swanson and Eric Bullington).

- Remotely assess the other missions
- Conduct a political assessment (UNOSOM)
- Look at repatriation and identify zones to explore (+ or – exploratory missions).

She will be replaced by someone who will continue the work for at least three months.
3) Assessment: An assessment of the entire Somalia mission needs to be carried out. It will be carried out under the responsibility of Operations, and will comprise three parts:
- Political assessment
- Assessment of MSF's action (ethics, strategic choices, etc)
- Programme assessment.

It should identify problems (change of programmes, etc) and will take a chronological approach.

3. MSF Belgium: Kismayo is not Mogadishu

In late January 1993, the Belgian UNITAF forces were involved in skirmishes with isolated shooters while the population violently demonstrated its rejection of any foreign presence in the town and its hostility towards negotiations started by the UN with General Morgan, Siad Barre's son-in-law.
The visit by Belgian ministers was postponed due to the difficulty in guaranteeing their security. MSF Belgium announced the evacuation of some of its international staff from Kismayo after several vehicles were stoned.

'Violent Demonstrations in Kismayo. Médecins Sans Frontières Forced to Evacuate Some Members of its Teams', **Press Release**, MSF Belgium, 24 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Seven of the nine MSF international staff based in Kismayo were evacuated to Nairobi yesterday afternoon. Their departure was deemed necessary following the escalating insecurity in the town. Violent demonstrations by the Somali population took place yesterday in Kismayo. Chanting slogans against foreign presence in the town, the crowd was attempting to provoke a military reaction. The forces tried to restore order, without much success. After an exchange of gunfire, during which nobody was killed, the MSF vehicles were stoned.
This incident further highlights that the security of humanitarian organisations in the field is far from guaranteed and that the military are unable to protect individual members of the MSF team. The organisation is nevertheless pursuing its activities in Kismayo with a reduced team of two, who are providing a permanent service at the hospital and the feeding centres for 6,000 malnourished children.

'Belgian Paratroopers Attacked in Kismayo', ***Le Soir***/**Belga**/**Reuters**/**AFP**/AP, 25 January 1993 (in French).

Extract:
On Saturday morning, another Belgian soldier also received minor injuries from an exploding grenade near a UNICEF building he was guarding. Sunday, a Belgian patrol at the port became the target of shooters firing from a house. Responding to the incident,

the Belgians stormed the building, shot down two Somali men and arrested three others. Yesterday evening, a Belgian non-commissioned officer of the 3rd Lancers was also injured by grenade fragments while driving to Kismayo airport. He was evacuated to Nairobi, in Kenya, underwent a minor operation, and was able to notify his family.
Explaining the tension, Colonel Vermote, spokesman for the army in Brussels, indicated that the riots erupted after an arms search operation, named 'Morning Market', was conducted on Saturday. The two companies engaged, supported by personnel from the 3rd paratrooper Lancers from the 14th Engineering Company and by the bomb disposal experts, and seized 37 arms and 186 kilos of ammunitions.
According to the spokesperson, who cited reports sent to the chief of staff by the Commander of the Belgian contingent in Kismayo, Colonel Marc Jacqmin, the incidents of this weekend were not, however, caused by the Belgian troops' actions, who since Monday morning have stepped up their patrols and arms search operations. Colonel Vermote confirmed that Colonel Jacqmin had advised against the Belgian Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, Erik Derycke, travelling to Kismayo for the good reason that his safety could not be guaranteed. [...]
Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium announced yesterday the evacuation of seven of nine international workers based in Kismayo. The aid organisation explained that MSF vehicles were stoned when the local population violently demonstrated on Saturday against the presence of foreigners in the town. French and US forces were also targeted by gunfire this weekend in other locations.

The town of Kismayo was attacked from outside and taken over by another faction while it was being protected by Belgian UN troops, powerless, who had no control over the town. They couldn't do anything. Armed protection was forced on us. We then received an American unit that took over handling the protection of the encampment, which meant there were GIs on the roof. The Americans forbade the population from moving around the town with arms. Given the situation, this was a totally unrealistic decision. So the GI who was on our roof, when he saw someone 500 metres away in the street, with a rifle or Kalashnikov, fired at them... from the roof of the humanitarian organisation's compound!

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

On 22 February 1993, the town of Kismayo, until then controlled by Omar Jess, fell into the hands of General Morgan, which cost approximately 100 people their lives and left many injured. One hundred people took refuge at the MSF Belgium base, protected by Belgian paratroopers, who were then replaced by US soldiers. MSF Belgium reported on this situation in a press release.

'Somalia: Violent Combat Overnight in Kismayo', **Press Release**, MSF Belgium, 22 February 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Last night, between 2 am and 3 am, violent fighting broke out in the town of Kismayo, causing panic among the local population. A part of the town controlled by Omar Jess seemed to fall into the hands of General Morgan, against whom Belgian and American

forces had intervened on two occasions over the last few weeks. The fighting left several dozen Somali soldiers dead. Some 100 people took refuge in the MSF compound around which the Belgian paras were deployed. The surgical team were able to make their way to the hospital, where the injured started to pour in. This new episode in the inter-clan war reminds us, as if it were even necessary, that the situation in Somalia is far from resolved.

Some 30 members of the Jess clan, including his brother and staff who were scared of Morgan's troops, grouped together in our compound. There were also some at the ICRC and at the hospital, but the majority were with us. So our compound became a target due to the presence of a group of 30 armed people. We knew that with all these people inside, Morgan's troops wouldn't delay in coming to pay us a visit. The American soldiers, who had taken over from the Belgian paratroopers that day around the compound and who were positioned across the roof, firing on anyone that looked like they might be carrying arms out in the street, finally disarmed them.

Then we asked UNITAF to evacuate these people. The American general and the Belgian colonel both refused to organise this. I spoke to MSF in Nairobi about it and they told me, 'It's not your job to do it; it's up to the ICRC or the army.' I don't remember speaking about it with the ICRC. Then at some point I heard tanks passing by in the street. I saw they were white Belgian tanks, I ran out and whistled. They all came into the compound with their tanks and I told them, 'I just spoke to your colonel.' This was a massive lie, I was bluffing. 'We need to set up a military convoy in front, in the middle, and behind to evacuate all these people to the other side of the green line.' And I said to the Americans on the roof, 'I've just spoken with your general, you have to return all the arms to the guys,' which wasn't true either. They said to me, 'Are you sure? That's impossible!' So I said, 'If you don't believe me, call him!' I was really bluffing and they didn't call. They handed over the arms to the Somalis. They formed a convoy of a Belgian tank, then a truck and a car, all well armed, and they passed over the green line, two or three kilometres, without being attacked.

Some 500 metres away inside the MSF hospital, there were lots of injured and their families, as well as politicians belonging to the Jess clan who had taken refuge there. I received information saying that General Morgan wanted to attack four targets: the MSF hospital, the ICRC, the police station, and the port. So I went to negotiate with his men. They gave us either 24 or 48 hours (I don't remember exactly), and I wasn't able to organise anything because we didn't have anything. I went back to see them to tell them that I didn't have any trucks, so I couldn't organise an evacuation. Then they said, 'Okay, we can give you', I don't remember anymore, maybe 'one or two days more'. The day they were supposed to attack us, they didn't. They attacked the police station and the port where the Belgian army were stationed, and they surrounded the ICRC office and homes, where they threw a grenade. The hospital was surrounded and they threw stones, but there wasn't any gunfire, it wasn't an attack. I went back to see them to tell them I wasn't happy because they were still surrounding the hospital and were making threats. Then they said, 'We just wanted to put the pressure on you to find the trucks.' A day or two later, we found the trucks and we carried out the evacuation.

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

On 26 March 1993, while Jess' troops attempted to take over the town, UNITAF carried out a show of force in the Bay of Kismayo to prevent the resumption of fighting between factions.

'U.S. Begins Show of Force in Somali Port', **Reuters** (UK), Sue Pleming, Mogadishu, 26 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
Low-flying U.S. fighter planes kicked off an American military push on Friday to block any attempt by one of Somalia's leading warlords to seize the southern Somali port of Kismayo [...] A 4,200-strong U.S. amphibious troop force set off from Mogadishu for Kismayo by sea on Thursday following reports that warlord Omar Jess planned an offensive against dominant Kismayo warlord, Mohamed Said Hersi, also known as Morgan [...]
Kismayo has seen some of the worst clan fighting since a U.S.-led 23-nation force arrived in December to quash banditry and looting of famine relief aid to millions of Somalis [...] Nine hundred Belgian troops based in Kismayo have stepped up roadblocks and checkpoints in the region as part of a drive to create a weapons-free zone. Morgan's forces stormed Kismayo last month and drove out thousands of Jess followers. The U.S. military, denying it supported Morgan, ordered his gunmen out and later said he had complied.
U.S. aircraft dropped off 200,000 leaflets in the Kismayo region this week, warning that anyone found carrying weapons would be considered a serious threat to peace. "Somalis must choose peaceful ways to resolve their differences. Those who use force will be dealt with appropriately," the leaflet said [...] The show of force by U.S. and Belgian troops is seen by political analysts as an attempt to prevent further disruption of Somali national reconciliation talks still going on in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. The talks were suspended for several days last week after Morgan's forces, using women and children as human shields, launched an attack on supporters of Jess.
The 15 factions represented at the Addis Ababa talks are said to be nearing agreement on a transitional authority for Somalia, which has been without a government since the 1991 overthrow of dictator Mohamed Siad Barre, Morgan's father-in-law.

Meanwhile, on 15 March 1993, Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium Coordinator in Kismayo, announced to Reuters that the situation had deteriorated and that Kismayo was more violent than ever. He tried to explain to the Belgian secretary of state for development cooperation, visiting Kismayo, that the majority of the wounded being treated in hospital were shot by soldiers in the Belgian contingent. The minister made a statement to the press saying that the use of armed guards by NGOs is dangerous and complicates the positioning of troops.
On 17 March, MSF Belgium held a press conference in Brussels and announced their shock at the minister's point of view, reminding the press of the dangers of confusing military-humanitarian relations, and called for a public debate in Belgium on the issue of Somalia.
In the field, the MSF team witnessed abuses by the Belgian paratroopers on the local population and complained in vain to the military leaders and politicians.

'Aid Groups Tread Thin Line in Somali War', **Reuters**, 15 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
While aid has been getting through in many areas in Somalia, aid workers in Kismayo say their work has been severely set back by fighting last month. "It's much worse now. Kismayo has never been so violent. Our programme here has been set back by six-to-eight weeks," said MSF's Casaer.
Holed up in their medical compounds, the relief workers only leave their bases under heavily-armed escort. The MSF's hospital has been looted on countless occasions and its workers have been shot at and stoned. [...] "You have to ask yourself if [it] is right to bring staff to a place where grenades are lobbed at them all the time," said the representative of U.S.-based World Concern, which has been in the Kismayo region for 10 years.
MSF said that at least 100 people had died in clashes around Kismayo last month between the forces of warlord rivals Omar Jess and Mohamed Said Hersi, also known as Morgan. The MSF's hospital in Kismayo says it is still treating about 40 gunshot wounds daily. "We are losing our credibility with the Somalis and this is the big problem," said an aid worker for the International Committee of the Red Cross.
There are continuing tensions between the Belgian forces and aid workers, who say they are concerned at being associated with the military. Belgium's Co-operation and Development Minister Erik Derycke said this tension was entirely normal. He criticised the NGOs for not working together more closely and said their image had been damaged last year when they paid local Somalis to protect them. "They went too far by hiring locals to protect them and they now face a very difficult situation. To say they are evaluating daily whether they are leaving is sad, but even NGOs have their limits," Derycke told Reuters. Aid workers, for their part, admit that hiring what amounted to private militias had been an error, but said they had no choice.

'NGO: Difficult Mission in the Storm', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Véronique Kiesel, 18 March 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Today, the renovated hospital is guarded by US soldiers from UNITAF, unshakeable in their large helmets, despite the burning sun, but for MSF Manager, Peter Casaer, the situation is still extremely tough. Even worse than before. "The political and military situation has deteriorated so much that working here is becoming more and more difficult. We are subject to enormous pressure from Morgan's men, who would like to be able to take over the hospital, but we want this to be a neutral zone, where anyone can come to get treatment. Furthermore, Jess' soldiers would like to come and take refuge with us. I sometimes get the impression that, since the arrival of the US and Belgian troops, the situation has become even more complicated. Before, the NGOs like ours were considered neutral. However, today, the population is convinced that the Americans support Morgan and that the Belgians are Jess supporters. Since we are Belgian ourselves, Morgan's men lump us all together, which is obviously very dangerous for us." But what does MSF need most of all? Security. "The hospital needs to remain open to everybody. We also absolutely need to keep things calm inside, because we're on the verge of exploding; even hospitalised, the supporters of either clan sometimes come to blows."

The NGO leaders present in Kismayo regret the time when they had to hire armed guards to protect themselves. A point of view that was hardly music to the ears of Belgian Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, Erik Derycke, on a visit to Kismayo, who, talking about the hiring of these militias, denounced some of the NGOs' dangerous practices that complicated the position of our troops (in Brussels, MSF leaders responded yesterday by announcing their shock at the slanderous words issued by our ministers and calling for a public debate on Somalia).

'Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium Shocked and Outraged by the Opinions Held by Ministers Delcroix and Derycke Following their Brief Visit to Somalia', **Press Release**, MSF Belgium, 17 March 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium is shocked to hear that after a brief visit of a few hours to Kismayo, Belgian ministers have responded to their assessment of the situation by attacking the NGOs in the field there and questioning the work carried out by them. These conclusions, drawn from the complex Somali context, do not take into account all of the actions carried out by aid agencies in the country for the past year and more. While confusion has been deliberately promoted in the Belgian public and the Somali population with regard to humanitarian aid and military action, Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium is shocked by the opinions held by some members of the military concerning the work done by NGOs in the field. We are appalled, in Brussels and in the field, by the slanderous words issued by our ministers.
Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium calls for a public debate on Somalia and an open explanation from ministers Delcroix and Derycke. Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium wants to reiterate that while the mortality rate fell by 50%, the malnutrition rate recorded in February showed identical figures to those recorded in November. The situation remains more than worrying in Kismayo, given the conflict there. On the occasion of the return from Somalia of Dr Luxen, General Director, and Dr [...], Project Manager, Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium wished to refocus the debate on the intervention in Somalia and Kismayo, and to express its outrage at a press conference to be held today at 4 pm in its offices.

'Somali Problems, Interview with Olivier Rogeau', ***Le Vif/L'Express*** (Belgium), Brussels, 26 March 1993 (in French).

Extract:
On his return from Kismayo, Eric Derycke criticised the work of humanitarian organisations in Somalia. Médecins Sans Frontières responded strongly, and urgently called for a public debate. *Le Vif/L'Express* asked the minister for development cooperation to express his point of view.
Le Vif/L'Express: You started a scandal when you attacked NGOs working in Somalia. What do you criticise them for?
Eric Derycke: My first observation was that in the southern region where the Belgian army was stationed, the NGO managers were extremely disheartened. The aid associations we met – MSF Belgium, UNICEF, Oxfam UK, and World Concern – had put a great deal of money in these operations in Somalia. We too at the Cooperation. The NGOs are full of good intentions, but they poorly assessed the political situation. They

have surrounded themselves with paid private militias. Donors might question this kind of practice.
Le Vif/L'Express: Could the NGOs have done differently?
Eric Derycke They could have withdrawn for a while. Their policy also ended up working against them, since the NGOs became victims of their own 'protectors'. The humanitarian associations are nevertheless essential in a country like Somalia. Multilateral or even bilateral cooperation only has a limited role to play. The members of the NGOs working in Kismayo and beyond deserve some credit. You have to be brave to help and treat the population in such insecure conditions.
Le Vif/L'Express: You seem, in more general terms, to doubt the relevance of the military-humanitarian operation in Somalia. What is it about this operation that bothers you?
Eric Derycke: Completely new, to the army as much as to the Cooperation, the mission raises certain questions. If we are asked to repeat it somewhere else in years to come, as will probably happen, we'd need to think twice rather than just once before taking action. We would first want to inform the general public better. Our fellow citizens have always believed that the paratroopers were sent to Somalia to distribute food aid. This is only partly true. Very quickly, the international relief effort curbed the famine and food collection was no longer necessary. Public opinion questioned what our paratroopers were doing in a country ruled by anarchy and inter-clan conflicts. They are starting to lose interest in the Somali situation.

'**Report** Concerning the Conduct of Belgian Paracommandos in Kismayo, Southern Somalia', MSF Belgium, updated version, 14 July 1993 (in Flemish).

Extract:
4. Complaints expressed by wounded Somalis and by myself (Peter Casaer) during the visit by Minister Delcroix, Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, Minister Derycke and members of parliament.
4.1. During the visit by the delegation cited above, Delcroix and Derycke and members of parliament visited the MSF hospital, accompanied by myself. In one of the hospital wards, they were informed by patients that all the injured patients there had been wounded by Belgian soldiers and that many of them were civilians. An older man spoke to the delegation, confirming that many civilians had been killed for no reason. The delegation paid no attention. I myself tried to broach the subject with a female member of the delegation, who laughed and said that we shouldn't pay any attention to this kind of nonsense.

We had a really good surgeon who had been a reservist in the army and who was familiar with weapons. When he operated, he took out a bullet and said 'Belgian bullet.' And there were lots of them, Belgian bullets. We took statistics of the injured who came to the hospital. It was the kind of document we sent to the press and handed out in the field. As soon as we saw a big delegation arrive with a minister, we handed it over. I guided the minister of cooperation and the minister of defence around the hospital, and I remember saying to them, 'Ministers, all the patients you see in this ward were wounded by Belgian bullets, but we haven't counted the injured people brought here on the bonnet of a tank.' In fact, when gunfire was exchanged all over town, Belgian soldiers did collect the injured and bring them to the hospital with their armoured vehicles and small white tanks. But they transported them on the bonnet of the vehicle, the area where you can feel the heat of the engine, where the African sun beats down and you can't even put your hand on it, it's so hot. And they'd drive

around a bit before coming to drop them off. They did carry out a humanitarian action, collecting the injured and bringing them to the hospital. However, it looked more like torture. I had quite a good relationship with the colonel and with one of the chiefs of the paratrooper unit. I went to see them to give them the usual speech, 'This isn't on, there are rules that the military are obliged to respect.' Their response, 'But Peter, a para is a para, we can't change them, just forget it.' I even read graffiti from Vlaams Blok, the extreme Flemish right, on the walls in Kismayo. It was a bit surreal!

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

It made its way back to the head office in snippets. However, there wasn't even any internal communications on the issue. A surgeon said on his return from Somalia, 'I found a bullet in the buttock of a patient over there, and this bullet didn't come from a Kalashnikov.' It was really stories like that that which began to sound the alarm. We thought it was bizarre. Réginald Moreels, who was President at the time, liked to present himself as a rebel, but he 'played' the institutions pretty hard. So the context was a bit particular. I remember at the time that we spoke a little bit about what a stance against the Belgian army could look like, and it was difficult to imagine! I imagine there must have also been discussions with the Belgian authorities.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

It was in May 1993 that, returning to Belgium after nine months of mission in Kismayo as a Coordinator, Peter Casaer wrote a report on "the conduct of the Belgian paratrooper commandos". This report was sent to the the King of the Belgians, who is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces but there were no plans to distribute it publicly.
In early July, a human rights organisation, Africa Rights, accused the Belgian military contingent of violent and racist acts against Somali civilians. This led to a public outcry. Speaking for MSF Belgium and after a briefing with the management, Peter Casaer confirmed to the media that his team in Kismayo had witnessed violations. V13
In mid-July, he was summoned by the minister of defence, to whom he gave an updated version of the report sent to the king in May. The minister then asked MSF Belgium to take part in a commission of inquiry that would be composed of members of the military and representatives of the Ministry of Defence. The organisation refused, considering that it was the duty of a commission composed of members of parliament to do this work.

'**Report** Concerning the Conduct of Belgian Paracommandos in Kismayo, Southern Somalia', MSF Belgium, updated version, 14 July 1993 (in Flemish).

Extract:
Attached is a report concerning the conduct of Belgian paracommandos in Kismayo, southern Somalia. The report examined five issues relating to the conduct of Belgian paracommandos and the reactions from the military authorities.
1. Events related directly to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and other events to which MSF employees were firsthand witnesses.
2. Events brought to the attention of MSF by Somali MSF employees.
3. Events brought to the attention of MSF by Belgian military.
4. Complaints made during the visit of Minister Delcroix, Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, accompanied by members of parliament.
5. Additional remarks.
[...] b. This report will show the extent to which it is difficult to collect testimonials concerning the conduct of Belgian paracommandos, both from Somalis and from foreigners, for fear of immediate reprisals from them. Complaints lodged during the preceding months were mostly poorly received and often related to bad treatment, as much as beating, in some cases. I asked the assistant prosecutor to interview people discreetly in Kismayo and for the identities of these people to remain confidential [...]
1. Events related directly to MSF or other events to which MSF employees were the firsthand witnesses.
1.1 On 19 April 1993, a driver for MSF was brutally beaten by Belgian paracommandos. The MSF team found him bleeding on the ground next to his vehicle, moaning in pain. The driver was struck because he refused to hand over the keys to his MSF vehicle, which the soldiers had asked to take for a drive. This incident took place in the Belgian military base (port zone) in Kismayo. [...] The MSF logistician in Kismayo informed the military authorities of the incident. The Belgian gendarmes heard him. MSF was told that the two paracommandos had to leave Somalia and would be dismissed from the Belgian army.
1.2 The Somali police force, reformed, and re-armed by the Belgian army, operated under the surveillance of the Belgian military authority. Many complaints from Somalis were sent to us concerning the arbitrary conduct of this force (thefts, murders, rapes). I personally witnessed an incident during which policemen in charge of guarding the bridge over the Juba (Sean Davereux Bridge) stopped a Somali vehicle and, threatening the driver with their weapons, confiscated a part of the load (food). The incident was reported during a meeting with the Belgian liaison officers.
1.3 Soldiers tasked with guarding the MSF compound were often drunk in the evenings and consequently very noisy on the building's veranda. Mahamad, the son of Mahmoud the Somali chef at MSF, was held by paracommandos when he crossed the veranda to enter the MSF house, where he had lived since December 1992. His arm was violently twisted until he cried out in pain. He was finally released. I was immediately informed of this incident by Mohamed.
1.4 In late March 1993, a military truck crashed into an MSF vehicle after entering the MSF complex. The Somali driver and owner of the vehicle got out to check if there was any damage. The soldiers in their vehicle started to shout insults at him and approached him. I was watching and intervened, fearing that the paracommandos would hit him. One of the paracommandos reacted angrily to me getting involved. Others surrounded me, threatening me with insults like: "We've had enough of Somalis!" and: "Why are you getting involved, you bastard?" Other paracommandos tried to calm their aggressive colleagues down. The next morning, the paracommandos involved came to apologise.

1.5 In late March, many Somalis came to the MSF compound to collect their pay or look for work. Repeatedly, the paracommandos wanted to keep them outside the MSF compound, although none of us had asked them to do so. On this occasion, Somali men and women were struck or kicked by paracommandos. I personally witnessed this and I asked the soldiers to stop interfering with MSF visitors if they hadn't been asked to. The incident was reported to the liaison officers.
1.6 Inside the MSF hospital, a soldier took out his gun and threatened a child by holding the gun against his head. There was no reason to do this, and the soldier in question saw it as a joke. The incident was reported to the liaison officers.
1.7 Soldiers who kept guard of the MSF house were often wearing nothing but swimming trunks. They asked me to notify them if journalists or superior officers were expected so they had time to put on their uniform. Many Somalis commented on this disrespectful attire (against their Muslim culture). This was brought to the attention of the military authorities at the daily meeting, without any direct results.
1.8 Some paracommandos keeping guard on the hospital roof urinated from the roof. They repeatedly urinated into the street from the roof. These incidents were reported to the liaison officers. Dr [...] visited the hospital in July 1993 and remarked that at night, waste came from the roof and landed in the courtyard where patients waited before going into the consultation room. Traces were visible on the whitewashed walls of the hospital. He informed the military authorities. The International Committee of the Red Cross also complained that the paracommandos urinated from the roof.
1.9 In March 1993, Somali women and children often organised demonstrations in the main streets of the town. I witnessed the way in which the Belgian armoured vehicles, CVRTs,[15] would drive faster than usual through the demonstrators. No incident was ever reported, however, despite the risks. (The Belgian vehicles often drove too fast through the streets of the town. A three-year-old child was hit by a Belgian army vehicle and died from the injuries). A Somali man, a driver and guard for MSF, was killed in an ambush by a Belgian soldier from the roof of the MSF house. Another guard was injured, but survived his injuries following surgery. This incident took place on 22 February 1993, in front of the MSF house. It seems that the reason for this incident was the total mistrust that pervaded at the time of the incident, caused by the town being taken over by General Morgan's troops. They shot at the Belgian paracommandos from a house neighbouring the MSF house. The three armed Somali men fired back (in the direction of the initial gunfire) to protect their position. The paracommandos returned fire in the direction where the shots fired at them came from. The three men were mistaken for attackers in flight, and shot down. I personally warned the Somalis, ordering them to stay within the walls and not to cross the threshold, it being too risky. The Somali employees didn't follow my instruction. No complaints were lodged following this incident, given that myself and other members of MSF, understanding the context, knew that the paracommandos hadn't intentionally fired at our staff.
1.10 Drivers and guides on a Somali truck driving for the ICRC were brutally searched by Belgian soldiers at the port checkpoint because a cartridge had been found (but no weapon). I left the port zone and found three or four Somalis moaning on the floor a dozen metres from the checkpoint.
1.11 Dr [...] witnessed a Bantu employee of MSF being struck on the chest within the MSF campus for no reason (July 1993).
1.12 Dr [...] also witnessed an officer newly arrived in Kismayo announce that he "didn't want to do anything for these blacks" (July 1993).

15. CVR(T): Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked), a range of armoured vehicles originally developed for the British military.

1.13 MSF's female Somali caretaker, Sarah Ibrahim Farah, was frequently whistled at by the paracommandos guarding the MSF house. When her husband asked the soldiers to stop, he was brutally hit. This incident took place in April 1993 within the MSF facilities [...] Other women, including MSF employees, were also regularly whistled at by Belgian paracommandos.
1.14 From 23 February 1993, the Belgian paracommandos guarded the MSF hospital and a house in Kismayo. Pornographic magazines were found there and even distributed among young Somali men. MSF employees and Somalis were shocked by the lack of respect shown to the local culture and religion.
2. Events brought to the attention of MSF by Somali MSF employees
2.5 Paracommandos on the roof of the MSF hospital fired at a vehicle driving in the street and killed two passengers (evening of 18 April 1993). According to the paracommandos, they were fired at from the vehicle and weapons were recovered from the car. The Somalis say that no weapons were found, and it was a car passing by them at the moment a grenade was heard exploding not far from them that was mistaken for gunfire.
2.6 Some Somali men complained that the paracommandos in charge of guarding the hospital roamed about completely drunk and offered money to Somali women for sex. These incidents were reported to the liaison officers.

'Our Paras in Kismayo Criticised, Delcroix Denies Accusations', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Colette Braeckman, Olivier Alsteens, Jean-Pierre Stroobants, 8 July 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Alex de Waal, Co-director of a little-known organisation, African Rights, set up following his departure from Africa Watch, an American human rights association, has brought serious accusations against our military forces. He states that between 400 and 500 Somalis were killed by Belgian soldiers, reported to have been brutal and racist. De Waal admits that often the paras were in a position of legitimate defence, but he stressed that other acts of violence or insults were wholly gratuitous. In Brussels, the spokesperson for the National Ministry of Defence denied the accusations made by African Rights, adding that an inquiry would be conducted.
This inquiry must happen. It is unthinkable that, if these accusations are unfounded, such a suspicion continues to weigh on men who have just returned from an exceptionally difficult mission. But it is just as unthinkable that, if the events did take place, disciplinary measures will not be taken; the full credibility of the UN operation and the reputation of the increasingly solicited Belgian army are at stake.
However, according to witness reports from organisations present in Kismayo, notably Médecins Sans Frontières, the mission carried out by our paras has been tarnished by certain improprieties. The less serious of these violations, yet very shocking for the Somali Muslims, relates to the soldiers' conduct: occasional drunkenness, wolf-whistling at women or attempts to touch them, brutally conducted searches in homes, and confiscation of arms found as well as personal objects.
More serious are the violations that cost human lives. Peter Casaer, MSF Coordinator in Kismayo for eight months, saw his own driver, who had intervened several times to save his life, mistakenly beaten by a Belgian soldier posted on the roof of the MSF house. In Brussels, MSF confirmed that cases of improper and racist behaviour by certain Belgian soldiers were reported, but the organisation also recognises that penalties were imposed. As for summary executions and torture, claimed by African Rights to have

happened, no confirmation could be given. Unless you consider leaving a suspect roasting on a roof in the beating sun while his arms cache is being counted as an example of inhuman and degrading treatment.

Press Review for MSF Belgium, 8 July 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The day after serious accusations were brought by the British organisation, African Rights, against the Belgian Blue Berets in Kismayo, every newspaper wrote that MSF had confirmed that the Belgian paratroopers occasionally acted inappropriately.
De Standaard, which was one of the first to print the claims by African Rights, ran the following headline, "MSF also saw paratroopers go too far." Dr Peter Casaer [error: Peter is not a doctor], who worked for MSF in Kismayo for seven months, acknowledged that the Belgian paratroopers were carrying out a very difficult mission in Kismayo, "but that doesn't justify improper conduct by a minority of Belgian paratroopers towards the local population". According to Casaer, "This minority showed a basic lack of respect to the local population." In at least one case, the military superiors reacted extremely severely: when a paracommando seriously beat an MSF driver who refused to hand over the keys of the vehicle belonging to the organisation, which the para wanted to use to go for a drive in the country. Also, several Somalis accused Belgian paras of stealing items during searches of their homes. According to the Catholic newspaper, MSF asked the commanding officers to "raise more awareness" among the paras on the exact nature of their mission.
For his part, Minister Delcroix defended his paras and stated that only one incident took place during the period December to May, and that disciplinary measures were taken against the paras. "Soldiers who show misconduct in Somalia are judged just as harshly as they would be in Belgium," explained one of Minister Delcroix's colleagues. The minister questioned the impartiality of African Rights, because this organisation is in principle opposed to military intervention in Somalia. The minister also accused certain Belgian media of not hesitating to "drag paras through the mud" by printing that they had killed hundreds of people.
De Morgen printed, "MSF confirms the inappropriate conduct of some Belgian paratroopers in Somalia." The socialist newspaper insisted, however, that Doctor Casaer stated that "we shouldn't generalise."
Het Laatste Nieuws (liberal) and *Financieel Ekonomische Tijd* (financial newspaper) briefly indicated that, "according to MSF, certain Belgian paras did not behave appropriately with regard to the local population in Kismayo."
Het Belang van Limburg wrote that, according to Casaer, "the Belgians sometimes treated Somalis brutally," but the MSF manager also added that "these were exceptions." The Limburgish newspaper also printed this statement by Dr Casaer: "we never saw firsthand Belgian paratroopers killing Somalis (as insisted by African Rights). However, what is true is that certain Belgian paratroopers insulted and beat up Somalis, including MSF employees, and that they behaved in a racist manner." The Limburgish newspaper reiterated that, up until now, the bands under 'General' Aidid had killed 26 Pakistani and 3 Italian Blue Berets.
Het Volk summarised the statements made by Dr Casaer, as well as the clarification by the Belgian minister of Defence, who criticised the Christian newspaper for writing the day before that the Belgian paras had killed between "400 and 500 Somalis in Kismayo". Dr Casaer stated that certain paratroopers were racist, some hit Somali staff working for

humanitarian organisations, others were guilty of flashing themselves in a hospital ward reserved for women, sexually harassing a female Somali MSF employee, whose husband was beaten when he came to make a complaint, and seriously beating an MSF driver who refused to hand over the keys to his vehicle. Casaer also said that to avoid this kind of conduct, the managers at NGOs now hold a meeting with the paracommando officers every morning to report any incidents. MSF asked that the Somali guards they were obliged to hire for their own security now wear white to distinguish them from armed bandits.

Onzct van Antworpoiin printed that MSF had already lodged complaints for racist and disrespectful acts by certain Belgian paras. But the Antwerp newspaper ran as a headline the reaction of Belgium's National Minister of Defence Léo Delcroix, "Don't turn the bandits into victims." The minister also took offence to the accusations made by African Rights that he himself accuses of prejudice and lies.

Le Soir ran with the headline: "Serious violations by Belgian soldiers in Somalia." According to this newspaper, Dr Casaer accused certain paras of racist behaviour and said, "he saw his own driver mistakenly shot by a Belgian soldier posted on the roof of the MSF house." Colette Braeckman wrote that Blue Berets of all nationalities committed "regrettable acts". But she believes that, "this is inevitable (...) given the imprecise nature of their mandate and the newness of their task."

La Libre Belgique gave a summary, infinitely more moderate, of Dr Casaer's statements. The Belgian minister of defence was said to be "surprised" and demanded proof.

When I got back to Belgium, I thought to myself, "We are residents in this country, we can't just let things happen. Réginald Moreels (President of MSF Belgium) said, 'you need to write a report for King Baudouin on the Belgians' conduct." Baudouin was an emblematic figure in Belgium. The king is supreme commander of the armies and doesn't have a political role. But the politicians have an interest in not letting anything get out, because they have political responsibility. So we wrote this report for the king on the conduct of the Belgian soldiers in Somalia. On 20 May, Réginald was granted an audience with the king to hand over the report and speak with him. We didn't publicise this. This report was never made public. I found out later that he was very impressed and very touched.

I had already spoken about these abuses at the office, then in July the African Rights report was released. All of a sudden the telephone started ringing. I learned later that someone at MSF had called a journalist. And then it all kicked off, the TV, etc. We called an emergency meeting with the director, the operations director, the communications director, and the press attaché. I spoke about the types of abuse, giving examples that I'd included in the report. They said to me, 'That you can talk about, that you can't talk about.' They said, 'You can't talk about problems with women, or soldiers offering money to women.' I don't know why they didn't want us to go down this path. The press relations manager didn't agree with them. She was furious. We didn't have a clear strategy for giving evidence on this matter. Justice? Politics? Media? And then we found they'd beaten us to it and we were on the front page of every newspaper, and there was a major scandal. We were caught up in the storm and so we took advantage of it. The fact that MSF Belgium said 'we were there' was someone other than a small unknown organisation that had sent a report from London.

So MSF was in the media, there was a public political debate, and the minister of defence wanted to defend himself. He summoned me and his cabinet expressly asked me to come with the Deputy General Manager of MSF, who was known to be close to the minister's political party. I spoke with MSF's managers, who told me, 'No, you need to go on your own, hand over the information and explain MSF's position, we want an international inquiry and not a Belgian inquiry.' In fact, the minister suggested an inquiry be led in Somalia by his cabinet, in

conjunction with someone from MSF. I said, 'No, we also want the ICRC and Amnesty.' He refused. So we didn't come to an agreement. This was in July. I think I had to give him the report that same day.

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

I believe that there was no desire to take a position publicly, but there was a desire to take action. MSF Belgium didn't really take a decision. It was more a case of spontaneous reaction. We didn't get on our hobby horse, we didn't enter into the fray, we didn't stir things up. I feel this report was really a tool to make contact with the authorities so these abuses stopped, rather than to denounce them.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

The successor of Peter Casaer as coordinator was also interviewed by the media. He attempted to separate MSF from the disastrous accusations made by African Rights. In his mind, the presence of Belgian soldiers restored a more stable climate in the region.

'MSF is Not African Rights', **Belgian Magazine (unidentified)**, 19-21 July 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Two weeks ago, the Briton Alex de Waal, presenting himself as the head of an organisation going by the name of African Rights, stirred up controversy on the airwaves of the BBC: Belgian soldiers had allegedly committed barbaric acts on Somali civilians. We know that these accusations, only based on vague testimonies, have since then been officially denied. During his stay in Kismayo, de Waal was put up in the premises of the aid association Médecins Sans Frontières. Before our return, the MSF Coordinator from Liège, Pierre Destexhe, also wanted to clarify matters. Notably, he wanted to specify that de Waal had never had official contact with MSF while he was there and that his accusations were his views only. Pierre Destexhe, who has been in Kismayo since 21 March, told us that he had never heard rumours or gossip about any massacres attributed to Blue Berets. The MSF Coordinator still maintains that the presence of and action by Belgian soldiers helped to establish a more stable climate in the region.

I always kept my distance from the soldiers. We would see them in meetings but we didn't mix with them outside. There was a distinction that not all the team wanted to acknowledge, and when a new coordinator arrived, everything changed. They would organise parties with the soldiers. All the original staff had left the MSF mission and the new

team hadn't experienced or didn't know the history of the situation. It headed in the direction of a reconciliation, greater harmony, and was less critical.

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

On 24 August 1993, in the '*Actueel*' programme on the Belgian Flemish language radio VRT [Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie], Belgian paratroopers recounted, and attempted to justify, the abuses that they were led to commit in Somalia.

Transcription of Interviews Conducted with Belgian Paratroopers, Broadcast on the Programme *Actueel*, by **VRT 1**, 24 August 1993 (translated from Flemish to French).

Extract:

The intervention of the paras engendered many discussions, reinforced by African Rights, a human rights organisation based in London. Its Director, Alex de Waal, accused the paras of killing Somalis [...] According to African Rights, 200 or up to 500 Somalis were killed by Belgian paras. And it wasn't simply a matter of self-defence. The Commander of the Belgian troops, Lieutenant Colonel Van de Weghe, who returned to Belgium a week ago, denies the allegations. In his opinion, "This report is outrageous. The facts have been blown out of proportion, exaggerated, taken out of context, or simply invented."

One word against another. Luc Haekens, working for Radio 1, met paras returning from their mission in Somalia. Aktueel collected a few excerpts from these interviews.

At the start, we let loads of things go, but at the end, yes, as you know, they don't listen to you, you aren't getting any results here, so you intervene a bit harder. They had a sort of stick, and yes, we grabbed them and hit them back a bit. Or we shot in the air to get them to disperse.

Did you throw food at the Somalis?

Ehm, yes, ha ha, if they were hanging about really close to you, you'd throw them something and they'd leave you alone. But there's two ways of looking at that, eh? At the start we did that because we wanted to give them something to eat. But, at the end we threw stuff to hit them too, right? Yes, it was you want to give them something but first they needed to suffer if they were going to get something.

You never saw things go too far?

Yes, of course. Some things were really funny. There were some who shot themselves and you had to take them to hospital. It was very funny in some way, sometimes. I saw one bloke put a rebar [for reinforced concrete] around a little boy's neck. It didn't hurt or anything. Just bent around his neck. It didn't hurt, but he couldn't get it off. So there were six guys, Somalis, trying to pull it off of him. But these guys didn't have any strength. And they couldn't manage, six of them. Yeah, so you see, we had a good laugh. The kid didn't really suffer from this bit of metal. But the idea that he was going to run around for the rest of his life with this iron around his neck wasn't very nice for him.

Were there things that did go too far?

Yes, definitely. There were 700 of us at the end, in a region twice as big as Belgium, and I don't think any of the 700 of us ever saw a Somali person malnourished. And then you

go and distribute food and while you're handing the food out they throw stones at your head. I don't know how you'd feel if it were you, but that's not funny. If someone threw a stone at my head here in Belgium, I'd punch them. If I'm there to distribute food and some bloke throws a stone at my head, I'd give them a serious slap, right. It's simple.

But what did you mean when you said "people who went too far"?

Well, you can hit someone on the head until they fall on the floor, and then you can go further, right? For me, if you go further, it's too much, if you start kicking somebody in the head or things like that.

Did this happen regularly?

Regularly, no, but there were people who really stressed at that moment and so they lashed out to clear their heads. There were things, yes, where you thought, 'How could I have done that?' You shouldn't try that here, that's for sure. But yes, I knew some guys, they followed some bloke and beat him, at one point, unbelievable. But, yes it's at that moment that all your frustrations come out and you clear your minds, you know.

Were there black people beaten to death?

Ehm, I think so. It's possible some were beaten to death, they're quiet about that. Come on, you'd leave them like that if someone died. Ultimately, you're only thinking about the paperwork it'd mean. But they put up with so many things, you know, so they recover unbelievably quickly. You can really go at it with them.

There are also things that I can't tell you, not to anyone, well to some people yes, certainly not in public. Because I'd get the guys into trouble who don't deserve getting into trouble just for that. If you spoke about these kinds of things, well, the military court is far harsher than a civil court. It's very possible, no I can't take any risks that they start investigations on whatever or whoever. Most of the time we killed armed people, if they fired at us first or if they were getting ready to fire at us.

Or if they were getting ready to fire at another Somali. Then we would intervene. If you see some bloke armed and you have him in your sights, then you keep him in your sights and you wait for him to do something that will give you cause to shoot. That might be quicker for one person than another. Yes, the last six weeks were like that, if you saw someone armed, you could fire, but in the air first. If he didn't hand over his arm, yes, of course you could fire at them. If you didn't shoot, there's a risk the bloke might take down a Belgian tomorrow.

There were quite a few deaths, weren't there?

Yes, you can multiply the official figure by four or five, at least. In the end we were just shooting so we weren't a target. Yes, in the end, the fact they were carrying an arm was enough, you shoot, yeah, and if they don't give up their weapon, you shoot to injure, right. But, right at the end, we would shoot straight away.

There were rumours about an elite Walloon [French-speaking Belgian] shooter who had already collected 30 or so "trophies" if you like. Also, at the start, the first bloke to shoot at a Somali, at night from the roof, had to spend an entire afternoon writing out reports. And you have to get them signed by this person and that person and the army prosecutor was still there, and so we drew lots of lessons from that event. So, when you take someone down, it's best to keep it shut. Don't speak about it to anyone. And don't start shouting it from the rooftops. "I shot this many, and me this many." The Walloon guys, they shouted it from the rooftops.

This bloke, the first one, he had to go through the army prosecutor, the medical exam at the doctor's and I don't know what other hell.

So consequently you were a bit scared of hitting other people?

Er, let's say that we talked a bit to each other, you see. In situations that weren't really a matter of self-defence, which was certainly the case at the start, you wanted to be sure, not 100% but 200% before doing anything. It was really annoying. So we made deals.

You see someone with an arm, or you enter a house and you see someone with an arm, or they are in the process of firing and you're caught in the middle – which we've all experienced – we made the decision to fire, even if it wasn't a case of absolute self-defence. Simply because they are there with their heavy arms and if they fire and you're caught up in it, or if they don't really fire at us, but over our heads. That's already quite dangerous. So we said, come on guys, if something happens, we'll simply say they fired at us.

An inquiry commission was finally set up, composed of senior officers and the National Defence's director of civil administration. In December 1993, this inquiry commission issued a report which recognised unacceptable abuses were committed, but considered them isolated cases.
Meanwhile, a dozen dossiers were opened on the complaints against Belgian soldiers, made to the military auditor of the Belgian army in Somalia.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 27 August 1993 (in French).

Extract:
On the list of misdemeanours, Renaud Tockert [MSF Belgium Programme Manager and member of MSF France's Board of Directors] described the dramatic incidents involving the Belgian paratroopers in Kismayo. MSF Belgium, who witnessed what went on, has decided to pass the affair over to human rights organisations. The contents are serious – over 100 cases of violations and murders. The complaints have been brought before military tribunals and a commission has been nominated. MSF Belgium submitted a file on the affair to the Ministry of Defence, who has acknowledged receipt.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 24 September 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Abuses committed by Belgian paras in Somalia: Renaud Tockert stated that MSF Belgium was summonsed to the Belgian Ministry of Defence to testify. A military tribunal has been set up; a dozen murder trials are underway.

'Inquiry Commission Report in November – Paras in Somalia: 25 Heavy-Duty Files?', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium) / **AFP** (France), Thierry Fiorilli, Brussels, 29 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
A little less than two months before the Belgian paras left Somalia, the "misdemeanours" side of their mission has floated back up to the surface with the military auditor, Van Winsen, making declarations to the Flemish press. According to these declarations, 250 files have been opened on Belgian 'Blue Helmets' since December of last year. Each time the files were opened following a complaint, regardless of who brought it – Somalis, members of non-governmental organisations, or the soldiers themselves.

Most of the 250 files have already been closed. They range from light offences, such as disappearing mail, to possible serious military violations, such as Somalis deliberately killed. The number of 'heavy-duty' files amounts to 25, pertaining to a period of around a year. This does not mean, we said it time and again last summer, that there are 25 proven cases of torture or killing.

'Report on the Somali Inquiry Commission: Unacceptable but Isolated Belgian Abuses', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Véronique Kiesel, 4 December 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Isolated cases of unacceptable behaviour, but also accusations (from African Rights) that do not reflect the reality, minor incidents that were subsequently exaggerated and uninformed, or in other cases, outright lies. After several months of work, the inquiry commission set up last September by Léo Delcroix, Minister of Defence, to throw light on the activities of the Belgian soldiers in Somalia, rendered its conclusions public yesterday. Abuses, brutalities during check-ups, shots fired when legitimate defence seems far-fetched, were definitely committed in undeniably difficult circumstances, but according to the commission, they are a far cry from the figure of 200 Somalis killed by the Belgians put forward by the organisation, African Rights. Not one person has been found to confirm or support Mr de Waal of African Rights' accusations, either among the soldiers, substitutes, doctors, chaplains, NGOs or 'elders' of Kismayo.
The commission, composed of three military figures and one civilian, concluded its report with recommendations drawn up to avoid any new abuses in the future: improved psychological preparation of the men before departure, improved familiarity with local customs, and the creation of an efficient system in the field for settling any damage caused by the troops to the local population. For now, all damage claims from Somalis wounded during road accidents or abuses must be routed via the United Nations in New York.

What the Ministry of Defence suggested, and we subsequently refused, was rather than setting up a parliamentary inquiry commission, a ministerial commission should be sent to the field composed of several military figures, one person from MSF, and someone from his cabinet. We said, 'No, we're not going to get sucked into this game, we're calling for an inquiry commission to be sent, but it should be composed of parliamentary representatives and members of international organisations such as the ICRC and Amnesty.' The minister replied, 'Listen Peter, this is just between us, between Belgians, let's not get the ICRC mixed up in it.' So there was a clear wish to cover things up. They sent an inquiry commission. It issued a report which was passed on to parliament. This report said that there had indeed been problems with certain soldiers, and measures had been taken, etc. It also said that with all the other NGOs, relationships were good. The only problems were with MSF. They didn't cite my name, but they did say that 'this person was anti-military,' and that as soon as he had left, the problem was resolved, because he hadn't accepted the fact that things could be handled 'between Belgians'. I have to say as an organisation we didn't react. We decided to let it go. We didn't demand an international parliamentary inquiry either. Meanwhile, the army's investigators came to see me. They asked me to sign the report I had passed to the king and

the minister of defence on each page, so they could use it in their inquiry. Some lawyers brought a civil complaint on behalf of Somalis and used this report during the trial.

Peter Casaer, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Kismayo, August 1992-April 1993, interviewed in 2000 and 2012 (in French).

Despite all these events, the Belgian section kept its activities going in Kismayo. Generally speaking, its senior figures considered the withdrawal of the other two sections incoherent and let this be known during the various meetings focusing on security.
On 1 March 1993, during a meeting of Somalia programme managers, the MSF Belgium representative declared there was no further need for armed guards. The French and Dutch sections stated that they would like to reach this point, but they hadn't got there yet.
Meanwhile, the heads of the different sections in Nairobi and Mogadishu held their own meeting. They agreed that there was still an emergency humanitarian crisis in Somalia, but insisted that MSF review its operational approach in this country, notably its dependence on armed guards and UNITAF forces.
MSF Belgium made a point of asking MSF France not to justify its withdrawal by declaring the country's emergency 'at an end'. Some MSF Belgium members even suggested involvement in rehabilitating the Somali health system, in support of the authorities.

'Security of the MSF Teams', **Memo** by Alain Destexhe, MSF International General Secretary, 1 March 1993 (in English) [edited].

Extract:
General constraints:
• deterioration of security (especially over the last fortnight)
• we cannot count on the armed forces to ensure our security at the moment
Security remains the main problem. Question: How do we ensure our security on a short- as well as a long-term basis? MSF Belgium has already disarmed most of their guards. [Their programme manager] thinks we should try to get rid of the guards for good and as soon as possible. If not, we risk continuing the clans' war.
It is up to UNOSOM (and not to the humanitarian agencies themselves) to take on the responsibility for the protection of the humanitarian teams. [The MSF Belgium programme manager] suggests a joint MSF approach to request this protection from UNOSOM. Jules [Pieters, Head of MSF Holland Emergency Desk] thinks it is impossible to disarm the guards now, but it should be done as soon as possible. He doesn't trust the guards at all, they can turn against us at any time. The Australian forces are not able to ensure the protection of MSF. Jules is also in favour of a joint approach towards UNOSOM to ask them for the protection of the humanitarian teams. It is up to UNOSOM to ensure the humanitarian teams' protection. Marc [Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Deputy Director of Operations] agrees we should get rid of the guards but thinks it isn't possible at the moment. MSF France trusts its guards for the most part and thinks that in this climate of insecurity they still make up the best protection. At this time, there is no alternative and it isn't clear that there will be one in the future. Marc doubts whether

UNOSOM will be able to ensure our protection. MSF Switzerland and MSF Spain don't have major security problems in the regions they work in.

Minutes of Somalia Project Committee, MSF Belgium, 17-18 March 1993 (in French).

Extract:
MSF international context: MSF specifically requested not to explain its withdrawal from Somalia on the grounds of, "the emergency is at an end."

'Somali[a] **document** cc. MSF Position in Somalia/Different Section[s]', MSF Belgium, April 1993 (mostly in French with a section in English).

Extract:
2. MSF sections positions

2.1 MSF France
• thinks the acute crisis is over
• isn't really implanted in medical facilities
• endures the same constraints as other NGOs on the ground with regard to dependence on the military
• finds the risks run by expatriates non-justifiable when compared to the 'rehabilitation' context
Conclusion: MSF France is closing its Somalia mission

2.2 MSF Holland
• is still threatened by local Somalis, subjected to blackmail from guards, can't fire anyone in case of problems with staff
• endures the same constraints as the other NGOs and still works with armed guards (like MSF France)
• finds the emergency less acute than in the past
• the expatriates on the ground do not wish to continue working in these conditions
Conclusion: it is closing its Somalia mission

2.3 MSF Belgium
• doesn't work with armed guards anymore in either Kismayo or Jilib
• can carry out some useful surgical work in the hospital, where there are still trauma cases (though less)
• still has a lot of its hospital equipment stolen
• is still subjected to blackmail (but manageable)
• doesn't find the threats or insecurity acute
• observes that there are fewer food emergencies than before
• would like to conduct a nutritional survey before opening more nutritional centres in Kismayo
Conclusion: we are staying for the time being

3. Comments and observations
Even if it's true that we take risks, sometimes really borderline, in extreme emergency situations, it is less customary to take them in the wake of these less extreme crises.

Nonetheless, we need to examine why MSF France and Holland are closing down. They give three reasons:
• the emergency is over, so MSF doesn't need to be present anymore, because the work ahead is largely rehabilitation
• the security has deteriorated for expatriates, examples of expatriates killed in a short space of time – it has become complicated to work in Somalia because we are still dependent on our armed guards
• the situation hasn't changed since the military intervention, and we're now totally dependent on the military too
My reactions to these reasons are as follows
• maybe the emergency is less acute, but I think this is lightweight; neither MSF France nor MSF Holland have quantified their declarations (or at least, they've done no nutritional or food security survey to prove them) and meanwhile the politico-military context has indeed not been resolved / and furthermore, I think that MSF also has a mandate to be present in situations of health infrastructure rehabilitation in unstable countries, and just in passing, it's complicated to leave the country after accusing the UN of being absent for the country's rehabilitation throughout 1991.
• it's true, the security deteriorated at the intervention's outset, but as things stand, this argument is flawed because on the contrary, security has now improved.
• On the other hand, it's true that in regions where NGOs cannot operate without armed guards, the situation remains of concern because we do not have freedom of action, we cannot hire and fire staff and we still receive serious threats after firing someone / this isn't the case in Kismayo and I hope it will never become so.
Nevertheless, I don't find this position rings true, it's doesn't hold water for explaining a departure from Somalia. [...] There may be some reasons to leave, but we should seek solutions first.
I persist in thinking that 'rehabilitation' in the context of an unstable country is one of MSF's aims, especially when the famine and civil war situation could flare up again from one day to the next. Let's not forget that the political situation is not yet resolved and some Somali regions have had a poor harvest this year (see UNOSOM report). We really can't say that the emergency is over in Somalia, because we just do not have enough scientific data on the current situation in hand (in some cases we have none at all) and we (= NGO) have fewer elements still to base future projections upon. So it would be wrong to leave declaring there's no more emergency, or post or pre-emergency, without being able to prove it.
On the other hand, we can say that the situation is looking increasingly encouraging for starting the health system's rehabilitation, hand in hand with the Somali authorities, except that little is clear at government level and any work carried out could be destroyed from one day to the next. It would be misconceived to think that the UN is going to resolve all the political, military, social, and humanitarian problems. The social and political fabric can be (discreetly) influenced by humanitarian action and it is clear that the NGOs, and above all NGOs like MSF, are the best placed to play this role, here again we should not count on the UN.
So we have an important role in Somalia, and an important responsibility with regard to the Somalis. Taking flight like the United Nations did in early 1991, and then seeing the country collapse, would be a mistake. We need to be aware that the flight of all NGOs from Somalia could indeed cause the collapse of a whole parallel network which keeps a handful of services in the country running, and the United Nations would be unable to bring them to life again.
To say that the 'UN military' is a major impediment to our work would be another error, because in some situations the provision of humanitarian relief (food) and security has

improved, and why not reach a compromise with the UN military when we have reached so many others, far more dangerous, in Somalia? [...]
4. Conclusion
My operational conclusion for MSF Belgium is therefore as follows:
Come up with some figures (nutritional survey among the displaced, hospital activities) showing if the emergency persists or not. If it does (given the highly instable situation in Kismayo) continue our work and even increase it (more than one nutritional centre). If it doesn't (given the repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya), try with all our diplomatic means to explain things to and convince our Somali 'interlocutors' so we can continue our humanitarian work with the aim of putting medical services back on their feet and transferring responsibilities to the Somali authorities as soon as we can.

Mogadishu was mayhem, no doubt about it. Kismayo was relatively protected in this regard. We could still work in Kismayo, which was no longer the case in Mogadishu. We had interlocutors we could still negotiate with, which included the factions that controlled the city. We did need to down tools from time to time and evacuate. But we negotiated afterwards and re-opened.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

Meanwhile, MSF continued to make its voice heard among the international bodies concerned, criticising the intervention's rollout and emphasising the need to resolve the insecurity problem as a priority.
On 13 March 1993, at the 3rd humanitarian assistance coordination meeting for Somalia, organised by the UN in Addis Ababa, MSF declared that the plan proposed within the UNOSOM framework had little chance of being implemented while the security problems were not resolved.
On 26 and 27 May, during a meeting to review the military-humanitarian operations organised by OFDA, MSF's representative reminded participants that while the military intervention had allowed large quantities of food aid to be channelled into the country, it had nonetheless happened too late. He deplored the military-humanitarian confusion it had generated and the negative repercussions on the security of relief workers, and thus, their access to the population.

'**Statement** Delivered by MSF at the Conclusion of the Third Coordination Meeting for Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia', Addis Ababa, 13 March 1993 (in English).

Extract:
For MSF, our main conclusion today is the same as our major concern before this conference began. This concern is the growing insecurity and the subsequent loss of independence. While it has been useful to discuss the plan for '93 in some detail with all the interested organizations, we continue to believe that the plan will not be implemented in any significant form before there is some solution to the problem of security and the political situation.

There is an unfortunate irony with this conference. While the plan is before us, crucial subjects like the transition of UNITAF to UNOSOM II, the future of the disarmament policy, the establishment of police forces and political reconciliation:
- have yet to be properly defined,
- have not been fully discussed,
- and shall not be prepared for the most immediate implementation of the plan.
In this regard the schedule of discussions has been somewhat backward. We conclude, Mr Chairman, that this plan's future, despite this conference, remains uncertain because of the failure to adopt these significant points.

Minutes of Meeting: 'Review of Military-Humanitarian Operations Organised in Washington on 26 and 27 May by OFDA', Dr Marc Gastellu-Etchegorry, MSF France Deputy Director of Operations, 6 June 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The aim of this meeting was not to reflect on the in-depth issues underpinning this type of intervention, but to focus on the operational aspects and where to improve things in the future. My interjections focused on four points (mainly concerning Somalia):
1) The military intervention did allow large quantities of food to be channelled into the country. This had a positive effect, but,
2) It certainly took place too late. (50-70 per cent of displaced children aged under five already dead, this point was taken up by the DART).
3) The politico-military-humanitarian confusion and its perception by the population (and local forces) has generated new security problems for us. Due to this state of affairs (loss of perception of neutrality) and the limits imposed by the military, access to victims is limited.
4) MSF thinks that a coordination body is needed and is ready to work with it, but not under it.
Several points should be noted:
The US' goodwill and enthusiasm (naivety??) is very striking. To the point where it is difficult to address more in-depth issues. Everyone is working towards the same aims (reach and assist the victims). So, how could there be problems with approaches? The only party who did not seem naive at all was Ambassador Oakley (I think he really understood ICRC's and MSF's reservations, but his priority was reaching his objectives). ICRC and MSF had very similar positions. ICRC were fairly passive (importance of American funding???). SCF said little. Their analysis is very close to ours. The American NGOs seem to have little problems working under the Stars and Stripes, but understand our reservations (in terms of neutrality)/IRC's intervention.
I think my interjections went down well and were understood. Several people (military, representatives of OFDA, NGOs) came up and asked me questions. But nonetheless, I think they will wield little influence over the recommendations.
MSF is often cited (Kurdistan and Somalia operations). The military consider NGOs as professionals who are familiar with the work and field techniques. So they want to work with them. It seems that the military are cleaning up their image through 'humanitarian' operations.
The journalist and RPG [Refugee Policy Group] representative expressed concern about these operations. If NGOs mix too much with the military, they will lose their international credibility, they said.
The congress attaché gave this extraordinary response to the question: why was Somalia abandoned and what factors explain this re-awakening? She explained that governmental

withholding of funding for Somalia meant that the Democrats (in Congress) could no longer intervene in the country, and so they were starting to react. According to her, this is about an administrative process and internal political balance, but this cannot explain the entire process.
It was important for MSF to be heard at this meeting. Its point of view should be explained to different political and humanitarian actors more often.

In May 1993, during its General Assembly, MSF France assessed the lessons learnt during its intervention in Somalia, its relationship with the UN and military-humanitarian interventions, described by the president in his annual report (covering the period May 1992-May 1993) as an "epidemic of the militarisation of humanitarian aid". He also pinpointed the difficulties encountered in highlighting advocacy for raising awareness. V14

'What Role for MSF? A Debate for the General Assembly', ***Messages*** no. 60 (internal magazine of MSF France, also distributed to 100 journalists), François Jean, Director of Studies at the MSF France Foundation, May 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia, Iraq, Angola. There is a long list of situations that give rise to in-depth questions on our latitude of action in environments going through significant change. It's definitely not the first time we've been confronted with real difficulties. In 20 years of interventions in all sorts of crisis areas, we have had to overcome some serious security problems, the indifference of the international community, or the intransigence of belligerents, so as to bring our assistance to the populations under threat, with our only passport being our independence and impartiality and, as our fireguard, our lucidity about the mobilisation of humanitarian aid to serve political interests.
However, we have never been on the frontline to this extent, and so often led to question our own role. Somalia is the most striking case at hand. We found ourselves recruiting armed guards, running the risk of fuelling a war economy, then – when the famine took hold – calling on the international community at the risk of inciting a military intervention, and finally being smothered by an excess of protection in a climate of total chaos. Somalia is, without a doubt, along with the former Yugoslavia, one of the most striking examples of the difficulties of humanitarian aid in an environment noted for the fragmentation of conflicts and the multiplication of intervening parties.
Crises have multiplied and changed in nature since the end of the Cold War. Opposing politics and ideologies have been exchanged for ethnic, religious, or national antagonism and guerrilla movements, which operate without support from 'the superpowers' and explode into myriad armed groups, functioning in a purely predatory manner. In this scramble for identity, the values we hold dear have become almost inaudible, humanitarian organisations are targeted more than ever, and access to victims is increasingly compromised. What can we do about this? Can we be satisfied with distributing medicines, at the risk of no longer having a permanent presence in the field? Should we call on armed protection, at the risk of sacrificing our principles for short-term pragmatism? Should we call for an international intervention, at the risk of increasing the confusion between humanitarian and military issues? Indeed, nation states are more interested in the humanitarian field than ever. Which is a strange state of affairs. Conflicts

privatise and become more criminal, while humanitarian work becomes more state-driven, more military.
The growing involvement of states creates difficulties in adopting a position with regard to other actors on an increasingly crowded humanitarian stage. How should we position ourselves, and perhaps collaborate with, nation states and the United Nations, without losing our independence and our latitude of action? How can we avoid the confusion of humanitarian work with politics, and the placement of the former under the latter's authority? What do we expect from nation states and the international community?
It is no longer enough to call for an international reaction when confronted with a terrible situation. Given an ever-more complex environment, we now need to be more specific in our expectations. We also need to rethink the future directions we want to take, our operational possibilities, our approach, and the positions we adopt. The next General Assembly, on 15 and 16 May, will be the occasion to host this important debate on the role of Médecins Sans Frontières in new crisis areas.

'**President's Annual Report** Presented to MSF France's General Assembly', 15 May 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The primary issue for us is maintaining our independence from the UN, as we do from any institution of a political nature. The refusal to work under a UN umbrella is also an opportunity to repeat, in a concrete and clear manner, that we refuse the submission of humanitarian work to the rationale, rhythm, and vagaries of political mediation because this negates the very principles underpinning humanitarian action. The contrary would amount to accepting that whatever the focus of political comings and goings, the bargaining, which have their own rationale and use, and can even be a necessity, they must take place and remain outside the arena of humanitarian aid: we cannot sacrifice people in the name of politics.
The second problem, perhaps more concrete, more practical: NGO collaboration with the military. There are some extremely contrasting situations which I will not explore here, we'll see some examples this afternoon. But it needs to be known that alongside some relatively positive periods in which we have managed to move forward, hand in hand, in the best interests of the people we aim to assist, there are other moments, perhaps more frequent, in which we have observed absolutely unacceptable, even despicable, behaviour, which is not only scandalous in itself but also has repercussions on NGOs in that confusion is rapidly installed between those expatriates dressed in khaki and carrying a heavy weapon and the others, wearing a 'white coat', because they all operate under a humanitarian banner.
In Kismayo, Somalia, for example, we saw racist inscriptions appear on the hospital walls, bullying behaviour, colonialists at their worst, from which we wanted to take a firm distance, but it was hard to swallow when going about our daily work. And I will not explore here the impunity accorded to those people who have at times behaved like murderers, as conquering soldiers, they have the right to strike out, at times to save or destroy, whatever represents, from close at hand or afar, a vague threat to their own security. There is, however, the issue of whether we have something to say about this impunity. Some Canadian soldiers are going on trial for the sort of behaviour I have just described. Let us congratulate the Canadian government for taking the necessary measures to limit this type of conduct, but emphasise that other governments have not chosen to adopt the same course.

I will add a personal and subjective remark, which may fuel the debate this afternoon. In my opinion, this epidemic of the militarisation of humanitarian aid will not pick up speed if we consider the calculation, the balancing of different interests, which underpins the decisions of those nations capable of launching such operations. What is this calculation? The benefits must be equal to or outweigh the cost.

The benefits are internal image and gains in terms of diplomatic and political punch elsewhere. The cost involves both finances and internal politics, as everyone knows that in the current crisis period we are going through, the opposition uses internal and external expenditure to its advantage, and the latter can be considered superfluous and incurred against the electorate's wishes. The number of occasions when the benefit outweighs the cost does not seem elastic. This is why I think this epidemic will be contained to a handful of countries.

This will also be the main theme in the next edition of *Populations in Danger*, in which it is crucial to clearly distinguish the different issues at stake. We must disassociate the indispensable role of humanitarian assistance from the UN and its political role, which is also indispensable. So we must make a particular effort to fight against the militarisation of humanitarian aid and its use to serve politics, for the reasons that I have just stated. But this is not about looking to eject the UN from the field, which would be both absurd, because we need it, and totally presumptuous and ridiculous, because whatever the case may be, whatever we may think, the UN will not ask our opinion before intervening. [...]

Weak points

Difficulties of conducting advocacy to raise awareness.

Somalia

We went round and round in circles until July/August of last year. Perhaps we were not sufficiently international in our advocacy, perhaps we didn't mobilise the international press enough. But what is striking is the common ground we find between the difficulties of disseminating information on Somalia, and on the issues we denounced in the 'Outlaw Hospital'.[16] In both cases, we observed a sinister transformation of the roles of both journalists and doctors: people must be informed and treated, for sure, but great care must be taken to respect the financial issues at stake, for which they all of a sudden seem to feel responsible.

In practice, this means that the editor-in-chief of a television channel that I will not cite refuses to go to Somalia, not because the situation seems unworthy of public exposure, but because quite simply he considers that it will not interest the public. In other words, it is not the job of the news services, but the job of the marketing department of the television channel he works for that counts the most. Likewise, the treatment of a patient these days seems more subjected to financial considerations than the patient's need of care and the role of a doctor when faced with this need.

The editor-in-chief forgets his mission of passing information, exchanged for a function of managing his newspaper or television channel's communications, and the doctor puts his role of treating people in second place to the role of managing health resources. Curious trends, which I hope will not spread to all our hospitals, nor our media outlets, but time will tell. [...]

What I really do fear, given the development of the humanitarian circus in Bosnia and Somalia, is the twisted new turn things are taking behind these images of landings. Images of humanitarian efforts whose humanitarian aspects extend no further than their name, mechanical actions, under the media's glare, aseptic, could gradually drain humanitarian assistance of its content. We must fight against this trend, with all those

16. In 1993, MSF France denounced exclusionary practices in French hospitals, using the campaign slogan 'Outlaw Hospital' to convey the illegality of denying healthcare.

who share these concerns. The trust in us, the credit which we have, put us in a favourable position to defend the principles that have brought us together today.

C. MANHUNT AND 'HUMANITARIAN CRIME'

On 5 June 1993, in Mogadishu, 22 Pakistani UNOSOM II soldiers were killed during a confrontation near a radio station controlled by Aidid.
On 6 June, the Security Council Resolution 837 condemned these premeditated attacks and called for the arrests of those responsible.
On 9 June, AICF announced the suspension of all its missions in Somalia due to the climate of insecurity. **V15**

'UN Asks Arrests of Somalia Killers', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Paul Lewis, 6 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The United Nations Security Council today condemned the killing of 22 Pakistani peacekeeping soldiers in Somalia on Saturday and called for the "arrest and detention for prosecution, trial and punishment" of those responsible. In a written report on the incident to the Council, United Nations peacekeeping officials pinned the blame squarely on Gen. Mohammed Farah Aideed, a Somali warlord who controls much of the capital, Mogadishu.
The report said the fighting, in which at least 15 Somalis were reported killed and 54 Pakistanis and 3 Americans wounded, resulted from "a calculated, premeditated series of major cease-fire violations" that were intended to "challenge and intimidate" United Nations forces in Mogadishu. Not since 44 Ghanaians were killed in Congo in 1961 had so many United Nations peacekeepers been slain in a single incident. The fighting on Saturday came as a United Nations force of 28,000 was taking over the task of distributing food to Somalis and promoting reconciliation. It is replacing the American-led relief force that entered Mogadishu in December and began to disarm the warring factions and escort relief convoys to starving communities trapped by civil war.
The Mogadishu violence, the worst in the country since an outbreak of fighting in the southern port of Kismayo in March, appeared to have dealt a serious blow to international relief operations in the country. Non-essential United Nations personnel and private relief workers are being evacuated, and the international relief agency CARE and the Irish agency Concern both said they were withdrawing staff until tensions ease.
Inspections of Arms Dumps
In its report on the incident, the United Nations said its forces had tried to carry out routine inspections of five arms dumps in the Mogadishu area where General Aideed's faction stores weapons. The country's warring factions have agreed to place their weapons in such storage sites under United Nations supervision. Three of the inspections were carried out without incident. But at one site, people arrived and began to incite a crowd that had gathered, the report said.
At another site, near a radio station controlled by General Aideed, the inspectors came under sniper fire. They also discovered and removed a number of missiles and noted that two armed jeeps that had been there previously were no longer present. At the same time, demonstrations began in other areas of southern Mogadishu controlled by General Aideed, and Pakistani and Turkish soldiers guarding the United Nations

headquarters returned fire after being attacked with automatic weapons and hand grenades.

'Three-Sided Ambush' Reported

Later, the report said, a Pakistani Army unit was caught in a "carefully prepared three-sided ambush" on a road while it was on its way to investigate another incident in the capital. The soldiers were pinned down by the fire and rescued by American troops who have remained behind. The Italian news agency ANSA [Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata] reported that American helicopters had bombarded three arms dumps north of Mogadishu belonging to General Aideed's forces today and that a large number of artillery guns and armored vehicles had been destroyed. The Pentagon press office declined to comment on the report.

The agency also reported that General Aideed had said in an interview that he regretted the deaths of the Pakistanis but that "innocent civilians had been massacred" in the fighting. At the United Nations, Pakistan's representative, Jamsheed K. A. Marker, pressed for the Security Council to order General Aideed's immediate arrest. But the resolution, which was adopted unanimously, does not mention his name though it is clearly directed against him. It strongly condemns the attacks on its forces, reaffirms that the United Nations commander in Somalia already has the authority to investigate, arrest, detain, and prosecute those responsible for such attacks and tells the Secretary General to "urgently inquire into the incident with particular emphasis on the role of those factional leaders involved."

Better Arms Urged

It also urges governments to provide the peacekeepers in Somalia with better arms, including "armored personnel carriers, tanks and attack helicopters" to give them the ability "to confront and deter armed attacks".

[...] The United Nations said "serious disturbances continued throughout the day" on Saturday, including attacks on the United Nations headquarters, Pakistani checkpoints, and random sniper attacks.

'AICF Suspends All its Missions in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Paris, 9 June 1993 (in French).

Extract:

The humanitarian organisation International Action Against Hunger (AICF) announced the suspension of all its programmes in Somalia on Wednesday, due to the "climate of insecurity" that reigns in the country. No convoy has managed to leave Mogadishu for a week, so the organisation's nutrition centres have been left unsupplied. The convoys are blocked due to a rise in violence, ambushes, and intimidations that place staff in danger, explained AICF in a press release [...]

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who had been working in Somalia since January 1991, pulled out of the country earlier in the month, announcing that it had "finished its emergency programmes". MSF Holland pulled out of Baidoa (200 km to the northeast of Mogadishu) 15 days ago, after the murder of one of its Somali nurses.[17] MSF Spain and MSF Belgium pursue their activities in Jowhar (75 km to the north) and Kismayo (400 km to the southwest).

17. The person was a guard, not a nurse.

On 11 June 1993, UNOSOM II's air forces launched night attacks on the neighbourhoods supporting Aidid, with the aim of destroying the radio and locations presumed to be holding weapons piles. On the same day, MSF France and MSF Spain signed a shared declaration drawn up by NGOs operating in Somalia for the special representative of the UN secretary general, expressing concerns about the consequences of large-scale operations led by the UN forces in Mogadishu. The special representative, US Admiral Jonathan Howe, was also commander of UNOSOM II.
Meanwhile, a surgical team from MSF France, accompanied by MSF's coordinator, landed in Mogadishu, despite a series of hurdles. The pilot and his passengers were threatened with imprisonment if the plane landed. Once they landed, US soldiers at the airport joined in the skirmish by declaring that, "NGOs are forbidden to come to Mogadishu." The arrival of the plane was made public on 15 June through a press release denouncing once again the confusion of roles between humanitarian workers and the military.

'US Attacks Somali Clan Chief to Support UN Peacekeepers', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Michael R. Gordon, Washington, 12 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
American and allied forces delivered a punishing blow tonight against a Somali leader in Mogadishu who has been blamed for ordering the deadly ambush of United Nations peacekeepers last weekend, senior United States military officials said. American officials said the purpose of the air and ground attack in the Somali capital was to destroy the arms stores and radio station that constitute the power base of the leader, Gen. Mohammed Farah Aideed. The officials said they also hoped to capture General Aideed and four of his lieutenants.
The attack was launched about 9 P.M. Eastern time (4 A.M. Saturday in Somalia). The action was taken after a clan controlled by General Aideed ambushed Pakistani soldiers in the United Nations peacekeeping force last weekend, setting up a test of wills between the Somali leader and President Clinton and the United Nations.

'**Statement** on the Events of June 17, 1993 in Mogadishu', MSF France Coordinator in Somalia, 25 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
As coordinator of Médecins Sans Frontières, I returned to Mogadishu on the morning of June 11, 1993. [...] MSF had left Mogadishu officially on May 4, 1993 after nearly two and a half years of emergency health and nutrition care in Somalia, since the fall of Syad Barre in January 1991 and throughout the civil war. [...] My mission was to quickly organize emergency support to surgical and first aid care in Mogadishu in the upcoming crisis. Médecins Sans Frontières was indeed concerned by the sudden evacuation of most relief workers and UN agency personnel from Mogadishu following the announcement of a major military operation in the city and substantial pressure by UN spokesmen to convince humanitarian personnel to leave town, referring to 'expected substantial collateral damages'. Immediately we planned for arrival of an emergency surgical team with basic emergency medical supplies for the operating theatre. The team departed the same day from Nairobi, so as to land prior to the announced closure of the airspace at midnight on June 11. [...]

The June 11 events: Although we had prior permission, the airplane pilot and MSF team were threatened with imprisonment if the plane were to land; later on, as the control-tower finally approved the landing, the same MSF team was threatened at gun-point on the landing strip by US military personnel invoking a so-called 'ban on private organisations coming to Mogadishu.' All these events took place one to three hours before the announced closure time of airspace at 24h00.

Press Release, MSF France, 15 June 1993 (in French).

Extract:
A surgical team from Médecins Sans Frontières has been in Mogadishu since 11 June to respond to the emergency medical needs associated with the gradual deterioration of the situation in the Somali capital. Médecins Sans Frontières worked in Somalia between January 1991 and April 1993. Last April, the decision was made to withdraw from Somalia, given that kidnapping was rife, and we were caught between the need for armed guards to ensure our teams' security and the presence of international forces. We did not want to add an additional source of difficulties. Médecins Sans Frontières observed and condemned the fact that this heavy setup did not disassociate in any way police missions from humanitarian work.
Médecins Sans Frontières closed down its mission last May, as it also considered that the nutritional emergency no longer called for a team of doctors in the field. Médecins Sans Frontières' return, justified by the urgent nature of the situation, is taking place in the same spirit of independence and responds solely to the humanitarian principles on which the organisation's work is based. The extreme tensions which have reigned in Mogadishu for some days give cause for concern that the situation will deteriorate further still. By mixing military interventions with humanitarian action, the international community has never really given itself the chance to provide a tangible political and economic response. Regrettably, recent events are the painful result of this confusion of roles that Médecins Sans Frontières and other NGOs have persistently denounced over the last few months.

'**Statement** from International NGOs Operational in Somalia to Admiral Howe, Special Representative of the Secretary General to the United Nations Operations: AICF, CARE, CISP [Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, International Committee for the Development of Peoples], Concern, CRS, GOAL, IDRB [International Development Relief Bureau], IMC, LWF [Lutheran World Federation], MSF France, MSF Spain, OXFAM UK, OXFAM Québec, SCF UK, SCF US, World Concern', 11 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
International NGOs operational in Somalia strongly urge that UNOSOM take into account the following points:
• The NGO community is fearful that any large-scale military action in Mogadishu would result in serious loss of life amongst the civilian population.
• The NGO community is concerned that the ramifications of any large-scale military action could seriously hamper if not prevent the return to normal humanitarian operations in Somalia.

• The community stresses that military action will have wide and long-term implications and this fact must be taken into full consideration.
• On the recommendation of the UN the majority of international staff have left Mogadishu and we wish to remind the UN that we have left dedicated national staff in charge of our programmes and assets and urge that every effort is made to secure their adequate protection.

On 13 June 1993, 15 people, including women and children, were killed while a demonstration was stamped out by the UNOSOM forces. The MSF team, freshly arrived in Mogadishu, treated some of the wounded. Rony Brauman, MSF President, declared to AFP that this murderous incident was monstrous. He again criticised the late implementation of Operation 'Restore Hope'.
Leading US political and military figures expressed their regrets about the civilian deaths, but stated that the UN's actions could be defended, accusing General Aidid of using women and children as human shields. House Democrats asked if the rules of engagement had not been shattered and predicted that this sort of incident would happen again.
On 14 June, MSF Belgium, MSF France, MSF Holland, and MSF Spain published a joint press release denouncing the excessive use of force by the UN troops and deploring the civilian deaths.

'Top Mercy Medic Slates UN Somalia Killing as monstrous', **AFP** (France), 13 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The killing by U.N. troops in Mogadishu of at least 14 Somali demonstrators was slated Sunday as "monstrous" by the president of French medical agency Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without [Borders]).
"We are asking troops of very different characters to maintain order, which is certainly very difficult for soldiers," Rony Brauman told AFP following the killings earlier Sunday when Pakistani peacekeepers fired into a crowd of demonstrators protesting U.S.-led strikes against warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed.
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) doctors, who only returned to the war-torn [East] African country Thursday, arrived at the scene minutes after the killings and took some of the 23 wounded to hospital, witnesses reported.
Brauman explained that troops from Pakistan, the U.S. and other countries, who were being "mixed together" in Somalia, had different ideas on how to operate, "especially in maintaining order."
MSF left Somalia at the beginning of May, returning to Mogadishu Thursday with two teams, including one surgical unit, to treat the victims of the U.N. reprisal attacks against Aideed, who is blamed for the June 5 killings of 23 Pakistani peacekeepers, some of whom were disembowelled.
"We do not necessarily expect to find a bloodbath but we don't want to take any risks," Brauman said to explain the partial return of his contingent.
He described the U.N. reprisals as "logical," stressing the U.N. "could not allow itself to be attacked without reacting."

But he blamed the escalation of violence on what he described as the "very late" implementation of "Restore Hope," the U.S.-led U.N. operation in Somalia which ended in early May.
"That took place eight or ten months late," he said. "If we had intervened earlier we would perhaps have broken the famine-versus-militia equation and prevented these dramatic incidents."

'US Expresses Regret at Shooting of Somalis', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Eric Schmitt, 13 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
Witnesses and hospital workers said Pakistani troops had fired into crowds of unarmed women and children, killing about 20 and wounding 50. But a Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman in Islamabad said the troops returned fire after being attacked by an armed Somali group, and strongly denied that Pakistani forces had fired on a defenceless crowd [...] In the shooting of the 70 or so Somalis today, the Pakistanis very likely feared that forces loyal to Gen. Mohammed Farah Aideed were using the same tactics to retaliate for American-led air strikes in the last two nights on weapons storage sites and on a radio station controlled by General Aideed, American officials said. [...]
"Obviously, we all deplore the loss of life and would hope that it would not continue," Madeleine K. Albright, the United States Delegate to the United Nations, said today on the CBS News program *Face the Nation*. "But I can understand what the fears are as mobs come upon soldiers who are not able to defend themselves."
Brig. Gen. Maurice Baril of Canada, military adviser to the United Nations peacekeeping office in New York, said in a telephone interview that his preliminary reports supported the Pakistanis' account, and that bystanders might have been caught in the crossfire. General Baril described General Aideed as a "cunning fellow," who would not hesitate to use women and children as a ploy. [...] Some senior American military officials, however, expressed concern that the Pakistanis, whose 4,400-troop contingent is the single-largest element in the 18,000-member peacekeeping force in Somalia, might be helping General Aideed's efforts to incite his followers against the United Nations forces [...]
The focus today fell squarely on the Pakistanis, who for the second day in a row, fired on demonstrators protesting the American air attacks. Asked if the Pakistanis had panicked or lost control, Ms. Albright replied: "I don't believe that is so. I do think that they are concerned about these crowds that are being incited. They're concerned that behind the women and children, there are people who are armed, and that is what I think is the problem as far as these crowds that are being incited." [...]
American lawmakers, however, expressed concern about United Nations commanders' control over their troops in Mogadishu, and about the volatility that is inherent in peacekeeping operations. "I would hope the Pakistanis could show more restraint, because if there are civilians killed -- women and children -- it's going to be very difficult to sell this mission to the American people," Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, the Senate Minority Leader, said on Cable News Network.
Senator Bill Bradley, Democrat of New Jersey, said on the CBS News program: "I doubt that the rules of engagement included shooting into a crowd. But I think what you're seeing here is the perils and problems of deploying multilateral military force in the post-cold-war world." Mr Bradley continued: "It's very difficult to deploy force for humanitarian aims unless you're invited in by a people that want you or unless you're prepared to stay there and simply impose police force. That isn't the case here, so these

are the kinds of things that are going to happen increasingly as we are part of multilateral forces in a very uncertain world."

'MSF Statement Against the Killing of Civilians in Mogadishu', **Press Release** MSF, Nairobi, 14 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières strongly disagrees with the excessive use of force that UNOSOM troops are displaying against the people of Mogadishu. MSF condemns the killing of civilians by UNOSOM troops that took place the 13th June 1993 in the Somali capital. We agree that this response was completely out of proportion to the threat the troops were faced with.
Being present in Somalia since the first days of the conflict, MSF pleads to the UN peace keeping forces to reconsider their approach in providing the security to the people of Somalia and to implement this through more peaceful means.

During the night of 16 and 17 June 1993, the United Nations' special envoy in Somalia gave an order to arrest General Aidid, whom he qualified as a "threat to the security of Somalis and the international community". Without delay, the UNOSOM forces launched an air and land intervention in the general's neighbourhood; he could not be found. The operation fanned out over the south of the city, causing the deaths of some 60 Somalis, wounding some 60 others, and destroying dozens of buildings.
Digfer hospital, where some Aidid partisans were hiding, was bombed during the course of the morning. Then it was the AICF house's turn, where the AICF and MSF teams were holed up, along with several journalists. A Somali staff member was killed; eight others were wounded.

'Troops Storm Somali Chief's House But He's Gone; U.N. Attack in Mogadishu Follows Hours of Bombing by U.S.', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Donatella Lorch, Mogadishu, 18 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:
After hours of American bombardment that shook the city, United Nations troops stormed the headquarters of Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidid early this morning, but the Somali clan leader and his top aides were not there. The center of Mogadishu was transformed into a battlefield as aircraft led the assault and peacekeepers swept through the city. United Nations troops cordoned off General Aidid's compound, but then became caught up in firefights with Somali gunmen.
More than 60 Somalis and at least 5 United Nations peacekeepers – 4 Moroccans and a Pakistani – were reported killed and more than 100 Somalis and 44 United Nations troops were wounded. After the battle, the United Nations for the first time officially called for the arrest of General Aidid, whom the United Nations holds responsible for ambushes on June 5 that killed 23 Pakistani peacekeepers and wounded 56. [...]
There was no word on where General Aidid was hiding, although at one point he was believed to be at a hospital here with many of his loyal militiamen. The attack was

intended to destroy his power base, not to capture the General or his fighters, and President Clinton called the operation a complete success.

Today's casualty toll was the highest in a single operation since an American-led military coalition arrived in December to guard the delivery of food to hundreds of thousands of people at risk of death from famine and civil war. The order for General Aidid's arrest came tonight from Jonathan Howe, a retired United States Admiral who is the United Nations special envoy here. The order came after several days of contradictory statements by United States officials about whether the General would be arrested. They apparently stemmed from uncertainty about what the authorities would do with him if he were captured [...]

"I have asked General Bir to arrest him when feasible," Admiral Howe said, referring to Gen. Cevik Bir of Turkey, the commander of the United Nations military force in Somalia. "I hope he will give himself up peacefully. He will be treated very justly, very fairly."

The attack began at 1:30 A.M. local time as General Aidid's neighborhood was shaken by cannon fire and missiles from Cobra helicopter gunships and a AC-130H Specter gunship. At dawn, hundreds of United Nations troops moved inland from the port area and came under heavy sniper fire before storming the homes of General Aidid, who was an officer in the former Somali armed forces, and two chief allies. The houses were deserted and General Aidid was nowhere to be found as peacekeepers searched houses throughout the area.

The fighting spread through the rest of southern Mogadishu, most of which had been under the control of General Aidid since the 21-year dictatorship of Mohammed Siad Barre was overthrown in January 1991. By this evening, hospitals reported that more than 60 Somalis had been killed and an estimated 100 wounded. Two helicopter missiles landed in the yard of a French relief agency, International Action Against Hunger, killing one Somali worker and wounding seven others, said [...] the coordinator for Doctors Without Borders, another French relief group. [...]

Maj. David Stockwell, a Spokesman for the United Nations military here, said all the day's objectives had been achieved by disrupting the command center of General Aidid's militia and expelling his fighters. While the disarmament of Somali fighters is still the goal of the United Nations' mission here, Admiral Howe said, the arrest order for General Aidid is in line with a Security Council resolution June 6 that called for the arrest and prosecution of all those responsible for the killing of the Pakistani peacekeepers the day before [...]

"We have to take the tragedy of June 5 and use it as a spur for disarmament," he said.

Today's assault, which Admiral Howe called "a complete success," was the sixth day of extensive military operations by the United Nations [...] On the first three days, aerial bombardments each night destroyed weapons compounds and hit the Mogadishu radio. The station, United Nations officials said, had been used to broadcast anti-United Nations messages and incite actions against the peacekeeping force. The fourth day was mostly a psychological operation as the United Nations dropped leaflets warning Somalis to cooperate and used loudspeakers throughout the city to broadcast the sounds of automatic fire and tank treads. The fifth night was quiet because of overcast skies. The attacks have fed resentment and anger among Somalis against the Americans and the United Nations. The tensions were made worse when more than 20 civilians were killed in two demonstrations on Sunday when Pakistani troops opened fire after snipers aimed at them, officials said.

Admiral Howe accused General Aidid of using women and children as shields for gunmen, saying that the general's faction had organized the demonstrations and that he would be held responsible for the deaths [...] At one point, the airmen halted their cannon fire for about 30 minutes, and loudspeakers could be heard in Somali and English

warning people to leave their homes. The warning was repeated twice and then the shelling resumed. Showers of sparks from several fires lighted the horizon and black plumes of smoke rose into the sky. At dawn, ground troops in armored personnel carriers, tanks and jeeps moved into the area. For about seven hours, Cobra helicopter gunships and reconnaissance helicopters relentlessly swept over the city, producing a constant roar. Several times, the Cobra helicopters fired missiles, creating [a] gleams of flame and explosions that shook the ground a mile away.

The Pakistani soldiers encircled General Aidid's compound while the Italians formed an outer ring. The bombing targets included General Aidid's compound, the house of his ally and neighbor, Col. Omar Jess, and two nearby garages that had been hit on previous nights, Major Stockwell said. As the United Nations troops moved in building by building, sniper bullets cut the air, shredding leaves on trees and imbedding themselves in house walls. At about 11 A.M., Pakistani, American and Italian troops entered General Aidid's compound [...] As the attack was going on, most of the capital's makeshift shops were closed, but many Somalis on the streets more or less ignored the fighting, walking about and occasionally ducking when the bullets came close. Men huddled in groups to listen to the radio. Only several torrential downpours during the morning provided a lull to the gunfire.

French soldiers at Digfer Hospital came under fire when gunmen using patients as shields started shooting, Major Stockwell said. One Italian officer at a checkpoint said he had confiscated five Chinese-style bombs hidden in women's shawls. At midafternoon, the Italian news agency ANSA in Rome said French and Italian troops would attack Digfer Hospital, where General Aidid was believed to be holed up with his militia. Moving stealthily in thorough house-to-house searches, French troops came under repeated sniper fire as they neared the hospital but by nightfall it was uncertain whether there were any gunmen inside.

As Mogadishu fell into darkness and an uneasy quiet, it was unclear what the United Nations troops planned to do next. When the troops moved out of General Aidid's house in the early afternoon, they left behind a small United Nations flag. A little later, Somali boys clambered through the rubble, pulled down the flag and tore it up.

'Update, Night of 16 to 17 June, 07:30h', **Fax** from MSF France Coordinator in Mogadishu to MSF Paris, 17 June 1993 (in French).

Extract:

The aerial shelling has started up again tonight and is even more intense. It is targeting Jess' and Aidid's headquarters and the district where we were before. New tactic: loudspeakers are telling people that their houses are going to be destroyed and are ordering them to come out with their hands on their heads and walk to Afgoye. This has happened several times. The sky is filled with smoke and the planes have been going over for several hours. The counter-offensive seemed to start at dawn and now it's 7:15 am and the district is full of the sound of all kinds of artillery gunfire (machine guns, RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades], rocket-launchers, etc), and missiles fired from helicopters.

Impossible to know if there have been casualties during the night in the hospitals. Impossible to leave Digfer. The fighting is close. We're staying inside, as we don't want to take any risks while the fighting is close to our house. Aidid's district must be badly damaged and what's happening means that it's open warfare now. We'll stay on stand-by, tel., fax and radio. Everything's ok except for a bit of a lack of sleep.

'**Statement** on the Events of 17 June, 1993 in Mogadishu', Médecins Sans Frontières Somalia Coordinator, MSF France, 25 June 1993 (in English).

Extract:

By June 17, our team of six Médecins Sans Frontières expatriate personnel and our Somali staff had been staying for 6 days in the compound of International Action Against Hunger. This compound included an office and a residence building, as well as gardens and storage areas, providing shelter to the AICF expatriates and local staff, to the MSF expatriates and local staff, and to five French journalists.

The location had been clearly identified for months and positioned on maps by the UN and particularly by the CMOC [Civil-Military Operations Center] and was signaled by flags, stickers, and a large-site painting of the organization's logo and name on the roofs and gates.

From this location, we could easily access both the Digfer and Benadir hospitals while being a step away from the ICRC residence where we were holding daily emergency health coordination meetings. We had been invited by the military to change locations, but were awaiting an announcement to the general population of our neighbourhood before deciding to temporarily relocate. Relocation actually posed several problems: security of local staff, security of stocks, accessibility of our aid, and security of our expatriate personnel. Indeed, if we had joined the new UNOSOM HQ compound as suggested by [UN special representative Admiral Jonathan] Howe, we would have become inaccessible to Somali health personnel and victims and would have risked security problems for our own personnel as an NGO directly associated with a military force involved in a retaliatory operation.

On the night of June 16 to June 17, the air raids that had occurred over the previous nights were resumed, this time specifically targeting the houses of General Aideed and Colonel Jess north west of K6. Ten minutes prior to the shelling, instructions were given to the population in these specific houses to leave unarmed and to walk in the direction of Afgoi road. A similar announcement was made at dawn concerning the surrounding of Aideed's headquarters and inviting the population to leave the neighborhood of Aideed's stronghold, located northwest of the K6 roundabout.

Our location, half a mile (approximately) east of the K6-Digfer axis, even further away from Aideed's than the residence of ICRC, did not seem to be a problem. No specific warning was given to us that day nor to the population of our neighbourhood. Though unaware of the military plans and decisions, we did not expect any operation to expand retaliations to other areas without prior warning. During the morning, we made contact with Dr. Fuji [Mohamed] of Digfer Hospital on the VHF radio, so as to assess the possibility and necessity of moving to the hospital to support emergency care. He repeatedly told us to remain home, stressing that the forces were deployed around the hospital and that confrontations were taking place right there.

Investigation of access to Benadir hospital showed that the Afgoye road was also blocked by the deployment of armored UN vehicles and therefore Benadir hospital remained inaccessible as well. Contacts with the military forces through CMOC on the emergency NGO channel confirmed this information. Consequently, the decision on whether to move our team to the hospitals had to be delayed hour after hour. We became quite concerned about the wounded, if we were not able to reach the hospitals, how could they?

A few minutes before 11:00 am, we felt the loud, shattering impact of a missile shot at the AICF office building. The missile exploded the back of a car and went through four walls of a concrete block shack built against the office building and through the compound wall, causing death, casualties and damage to the shack, the office building

and the car. A few seconds later a second loud explosion came quite close, shaking the house once more; though we did not later find the remains of that supposed second missile.
The TOW [tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided] missile attack launched from a helicopter south of our location (as indicated by the direction of the guiding threads) was followed by a long (10 to 15 minutes) 20mm machine gun attack. These events prompted us to contact the military (through the CMOC interface) in order to have UN forces interrupt their attack on the NGO compound. CMOC then contacted the UN forces HQ and the order was given to stop the shelling of our office, which indeed they did.

All along we had been providing emergency care to our victims of the attack, Somali staff members of AICF and MSF. One man, Mohammed Shir Abdi, who was in the shack hit by the missile died almost immediately. Another, Abshir, was in critical condition for [a] few hours but benefited from the care of the medical team, before being transferred to the hospital. The seven other casualties were slightly wounded and were provided with first aid care by the medical team. Neither of our patients could have reached the hospital. Without medical supervision the severely injured person could have died that day. The dead man was presented to his family that same afternoon, and the family decided to bury him right away without reporting to the hospital mortuary, quite a common happening in Mogadishu. It was extremely difficult to travel in and out of the area: journalists returning home testified to having been shot at by UN forces in the streets despite having identified themselves. Where could anyone travel to anyway, to look for emergency surgical aid? The SOS [Children's Villages] hospital received a few patients but is known not to have a surgeon, nor to provide surgical care, and the ICRC hospital in North Mogadishu was not only furthest away but also particularly inaccessible to the majority of South Mogadishu clan members. In other words, we were at that stage convinced there was a major access problem to emergency care, as well as a likely under-reporting of Somali casualties to be expected.
The attacks took us by surprise as there was no expectation that UN forces would target an identified NGO compound. We requested an official investigation of the events, and this request was presented that day, June 17, to UNOSOM through CMOC on the emergency Channel. We were concerned the forces were not made aware of the NGO presence and were not respecting the humanitarian flags and signals.
All victims in this NGO compound were innocent victims as far as we witnessed: there were no snipers in the compound, and no guns in sight. We could not identify what had triggered such a heavy-handed attack. Pending the official results of the investigation (still not communicated at this date to MSF), we received several different explanations for the event through UNOSOM civilian, CMOC, the commander of French forces in Mogadishu, and the rumour-mill. The first spontaneous one was the accusation that there was a Somali sniper on the AICF compound. Since we were all out with the local staff, around the place near the impact of the missile that morning, we were convinced that this was not the case and appealed for the investigation to proceed. The second was that three missiles had been lost that day. We did not accept this explanation either. Finally, the explanation given by French Lieutenant Bourgain referred to a confusion on the part of a helicopter pilot who apparently saw the microphone boom of FRANCE 2 TV journalists in the back of the pick-up truck and thought it was a gun. This last explanation still does not explain the disproportion between the threat of a hypothetical gun and the heavy handed attack involving missiles and 10 minutes of 20mm machine gun shelling, maximizing the number of victims.
We still could not leave our compound during the early afternoon, as both CMOC and our Somali staff advised us not to. We were told that the conflict had intensified around

Digfer hospital, and we later learned that the hospital had been shot at and shelled by UN forces. I visited the Digfer hospital myself the next day and witnessed the impact of the shelling on the hospital facilities: the septic operation theater appeared to have been shelled by very heavy artillery which pierced a large hole in the structure's wall next to the air conditioning system, the water pipe system (though not the pumping system) had been broken in places and water was pouring through the facade and flooding the ground; many wards and corridors had lost their windows, several structures above doors and balconies were broken down, the electric system was partly damaged, the operating theater pharmacy ceiling was leaking and last, but not least, the wards were full of exploded construction material but empty of patients. All patients had left the hospital, including the most recent severe cases carried by their families along with their mattresses and IV fluids.

We were told, to justify the attack on the hospital, that General Aideed had supposedly taken a position in the hospital. Initial shooting instructions to UN forces on the ground were apparently only to use small weapons on the fourth floor (where some Somali gunmen were indeed positioned), but the entire hospital, including the ground floor, ended up taking bits from artillery. Most patients will not return soon to either hospital in light of what has happened. There is a growing feeling that one is safer at home. We have met patients that had left Digfer hospital with their families, they chose not to return too soon. After a major clean-up and some small emergency repairs by the Somali Red Crescent Society, Digfer Hospital is ready to welcome patients again while assessment and implementation of major structural work will have to wait for calmer tunes.

The plan of the ground operation necessarily drew the conflict to the grounds of the Digfer hospital. Did the UN forces take all necessary precautions, in the planning stages as well as during the operation itself, to limit the risk of this medical establishment becoming a target of operations and finally under siege? A visit to the UN military hospitals in the following days confirmed indications that both the US and the Swedish hospitals, previously involved in treating Somali patients as well, had closed their doors to anybody but UNOSOM at the onset of the military operation. The Moroccan hospital, however, continued its open-door policy for Somalis, though this was not necessarily easy for either Moroccans or Somalis: (a) The heavy toll on Moroccan forces (how many of them shot, as we were by American helicopters?) brought many patients (b) The visible front line position of the Moroccans in the attack did not encourage Somalis to head for that hospital. (c) The hospital was not accessible from east of K6-Afgoi road.

As UNOSOM has declared ground operations in South Mogadishu would resume anytime, and as disarmament is a mandate of UNOSOM in Somalia, humanitarian organizations are raising concerns at the priority (or lack thereof) given to civilian populations and humanitarian concerns in the planning of operations. While we are coordinating between civilian organizations for first aid to be widespread throughout the city, it is important, I believe, to testify about what we witnessed on June 17, so as to assure that, in the difficult and challenging context of urban warfare, humanitarian principles continue to be respected by peace-making forces.

We'd finished up and all the programmes were closed. The teams had all been withdrawn. There were no MSF personnel left in Somalia. I was completely alone. The soldiers announced that they wanted humanitarian workers to leave the capital because, 'It's gonna be war zone territory, you have no place here.' I contacted them and asked them, 'Which hospitals can the wounded go to? What's your medical plan?' They didn't have a medical plan. They didn't know the hospitals. They only knew the Red Cross hospital and they weren't even aware that people in the south of the city couldn't get to it because it's in the

north on the other side of the frontline. They knew nothing, not even the slightest thing about the Geneva conventions. There was a lawyer on the American army team who understood but he didn't seem to have any real authority. But, later on, he was to be key in getting the Americans to see the mess they had created.
They had set up an operation and they weren't able to give any answers regarding the guarantees they could offer the local inhabitants. So we set up some equipment in the hospitals and in the AICF compound and we brought in a surgical team: surgeon, post-op, etc. We expected to get shot by a Kalashnikov every second of the day in Mogadishu. That was what the atmosphere was like. But to be bombed by the army? When we did everything by the book? That was not something we were expecting. If anyone is supposed to respect the Geneva conventions, it's got to be the army. They have training budgets and are supposed to know the rules!
Well anyhow. We painted a big cross on the building. But in fact, the MSF team didn't do much. The UN forces positioned tanks at the entrances to Banaadir and Digfer hospitals so nobody else could get in. When the shelling started, we called the hospital management who told us, 'Don't come, you can't get in and the fighting is just outside the hospital.' Digfer hospital is a high building with lots of floors. The combat ended up in the hospital with the Somalis positioned at the windows and they started firing at the UN forces from above. So the UN started shelling the hospital. All the patients were running away and jumping over the hospital walls, some were still on drips. The team was stuck in the compound. Stephen Smith, the journalist from Libération*, and some TV reporters came to seek shelter in the house because there was shooting everywhere. They had a long pole with a microphone on the end of it at the back of their pick-up. The vehicle arrived really, really fast, they opened the gate and let it in and then it stopped. They got out and the helicopter started barely a minute later. The soldiers said it was because the pick-up was going very fast and the microphone pole looked like a weapon. First I called the soldiers and told them to stop shooting. I swore at them all, I was beside myself. Right then, I would have sworn at anybody. I'd never felt as traumatised by what was going on except perhaps about the question that still remains: had it been a mistake to bring in a surgical team to have them face this kind of situation? The people who were affected were already in the situation so I don't necessarily feel I was responsible for their lives. But it could have been the lives of the team I had brought in and that would have devastated me. But the shells that fell on us really did frighten me. So I then put all my energy into getting answers.*

[…] MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, March-July 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

All MSF sections immediately issued a press release denouncing the attack and lack of prior information on its magnitude. MSF declared that it had demanded that UNOSOM conduct an official investigation. The MSF France management team also decided to submit an appeal within the scope of the internal regulations of the United Nations and national commands. **V16**

'UNOSOM Forces Attack Relief Base – MSF Calls for Official Enquiry', MSF **Press Release**, 17 June 1993 (in English/in French).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières vigorously condemns the attack on the AICF (International Action Against Hunger) base in Mogadishu on Thursday, 17 June, 1993 at 11:30 Somali

time (9:30 GMT). Two AICF staff members, six MSF staff members, five journalists and several Somali staff were in the building at the time of the attack. According to reports received so far, two missiles and heavy machine-gun fire were aimed directly at the building, killing one Somali employee, wounding eight others, one critically, and causing extensive damage to the building. The team has no way of leaving the base or evacuating the wounded to the hospital.
MSF denounces the fact that no earlier warning was given by the peacekeeping forces as to the extent of the attack, as well as the serious hindrance being caused to the efficiency of relief operations. The team immediately demanded that UNOSOM forces conduct an official inquiry into the reasons for the attack. MSF deplores that this latest act of war can only serve to put in jeopardy, or even paralyse the work of relief organizations in Mogadishu.

If all we do is to bear witness in a press release and complain, 'MSF has been shelled,' that makes us look like insignificant humanitarians who don't like war. The military will reply: 'This is war. If they're scared of gunfire, if they're not able to put up with the sound of canons, they should go and play somewhere else. The house, that was a blunder and, as for the hospital, these wretched humanitarians are incapable of seeing that it was full of spies and fighters ready to attack our soldiers. It's a disgrace that MSF isn't capable of having a hospital where there are just wounded people. We have an obligation to maintain order. It's normal, it's the "humanitarian action by the military" etc. We're here to ensure their security so we were right to shell the hospital.' In the public's mind, the two positions risk telescoping and nothing else will happen. And neither can we just shout our indignation in the face of the peacekeeping forces' behaviour, because the situation is complicated. We think it's actually better that they do get involved in some places but we don't know how and to what extent we can count on them. So the challenge is not to just stamp our collective foot, but rather to know if, in the cases where we take the risk of calling for some military intervention, we can test its effectiveness, identify its limitations and any hidden agendas.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor from 1991, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

The MSF team protested to the UNOSOM II headquarters in Mogadishu, which promised compensation. The organisation declined, as it refused to accept that the only legal recourse against the illegal operation could be financial. Furthermore, by accepting, it would risk denying itself the possibility of any other recourse. To the protestations of the team against what they viewed as a violation of the Geneva conventions, the US general answered that there is no limit to the force that can be used in a peacekeeping operation.
MSF wanted to challenge this line of reasoning and submitted an appeal. Given that the organisation had often called for the international community to 'take its responsibilities', it may have appeared somewhat contradictory to lodge a complaint against the peacekeeping forces whose mission was precisely to protect assistance to the population. But the complaint was mainly intended to test the reality of the balance of power between humanitarian aid workers and the army in peacekeeping operations.

We're in a phase of a new world order where, with our humanitarian hats on, we think it might not be so bad if force were to be used when we quite simply can't do any more. And that's when it's us – we the humanitarian actors – finding ourselves victims of the peacekeeping forces for the first time. It's really hard to swallow. We have to react, and straight away, so I ask [the coordinator], 'Was your compound clearly identified? Did you protest to anybody as soon as the attack started? Who were your points of contact in the field?' We absolutely have to have the facts because, at MSF, things get forgotten really quickly. Nobody knows anything anymore; it all fades so fast. Nobody knows if we objected or not! I put the documents together: the rental agreement for the house, the description of the hospital and the number of patients, the protest lodged with the colonel. [The coordinator] checks it all. We had indeed clearly identified ourselves to the UN: there were big red crosses on the roof of the hospital and on the house and there were flags, so objectively, the buildings were marked.

[The coordinator] said to the American general: 'You've attacked a hospital, our house, which are protected by the Geneva conventions.' He replied that in a peacekeeping operation, there is no limit on the force that can be deployed: 'This hospital was a military target because there were soldiers in it. The use of force by peacekeeping forces is not regulated by the Geneva conventions. We're here to restore peace so there is no restriction on the amount of force we use.'

There's no point in expecting the army to explain themselves voluntarily. We've got to manage to get them to say why they are here, how far they'll go for their mission and if we can count on them to protect people or not. Are they ready to expose their soldiers or not? So we talk to them to see what they have to say and it works! We manage to get those who use force to utter words of justification.

The signature on the fax meant we could find out who was officially in charge. As it's a United Nations force, officially it's a Turk and the second-in-command is an American. In multinational force organisational charts, the Americans always hide behind an ally, a dual hierarchical system. We're pretty sure that it's not the Turk who's in command when the second-in-command is American and he's the one who answered us! And then they offer us compensation, because they have a compensation commission. But we think it's unacceptable that the only legal recourse against illegality is financial. So we refused the money. And anyway, once we'd got compensation, we would have had no right to lodge any kind of complaint.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor from 1991, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

MSF needed to establish, in this unprecedented situation, where the responsibilities lay in order to be able to lodge a complaint with the appropriate authorities. But, as it was never envisaged that United Nations forces, supposedly at the service of humanity, could make mistakes and be held accountable, no provision was made.

I realised that in fact there was nowhere to lodge a complaint. But, there must be some entity that controls this kind of action. Complaints can be lodged with the different national headquarters, so we sent it to all the ministers of defence of the contingents deployed in Somalia. I looked into whom we could send it to at the United Nations. We couldn't lodge a complaint with the Peacekeeping Operations Department, and only states can lodge a complaint with the International Court of Justice. I discovered that there is a United Nations administrative tribunal that UN workers can lodge complaints with but it's only for individuals employed by the United Nations who have been subjected to some kind of prejudice. It is the

only legal instrument available where acts committed by the United Nations that have caused prejudice to an individual can be contested. Basically, the United Nations were so well designed to do 'good' that nobody contemplated that it could do 'wrong'. So there's nowhere to go to take a stand when the United Nations does something wrong.
All that's left is an article in the Charter of the United Nations that states that the Security Council remains responsible for drawing up plans for the application of force and how it is used. It is the Council that prepares plans for the application of force, plans of attack, etc. But in reality, it doesn't really work because the Military Staff Committee that, in principle, sits on the Security Council has never functioned properly because of the Cold War. So, the secretary general set up the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in parallel, but there is no specific accountability. We then decided to submit an appeal to the Security Council on the basis of the Charter as it states that it's the Council that supervises plans for the application of force. We told them that we contested the way they used force and demanded a response.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor from 1991, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

In the meantime, on 12 July 1993, UNOSOM forces shelled one of General Aidid's houses where elders, clan, and local leaders were meeting to find a political solution to end the inter-faction conflicts. A mob killed four foreign journalists in retaliation.
The media and international community stepped up criticism of the UN forces' strategy and urged them to resume discussions with General Aidid. But the UN representative was determined to maintain a strategy of avoiding ground engagement and thus casualties among peacekeeping forces.

'Somalia: After the Raid Against General Aidid, UN Representative Justifies the Use of Force', ***Le Monde*** (France), Jean Hélène, Nairobi, 15 July 1993 (in French).

Extract:
"Appeasement is a bad policy in a climate of continuing terrorism. There comes a time when it is necessary to deploy force," Special United Nations Representative to Somalia and American Admiral Jonathan Howe declared in Mogadishu on Tuesday 13 July, ruling out any change in UN policy regarding the rebel general. "We aren't going to negotiate with Aidid, he has to give himself up and we'll make sure he has a fair trial," he stated. He went on to say that he is "convinced that the majority of Somalis understand our action".
The admiral was endeavouring to respond to international criticism, and more particularly that of the Italian authorities and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), after the raid on Monday 12 July by UN forces on a position held by General Aidid, which, according to information received from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), left at least 54 people dead and 174 wounded. Four foreign journalists were killed by an angry mob just after the UN raid. Their bodies arrived on Tuesday at Nairobi airport, where three of the bereaved families were waiting [...]
Admiral Howe rejected any suggestion of resuming discussions with General Aidid who, since the change in UN policy towards him, says he is ready to hold fresh talks with UNOSOM. Not only a victory for the general, who would thus escape the arrest warrant issued against him; this resumption in discussions would mean a return for the UN to

its initial position, when it made a vain attempt to bring peace negotiations between the Somali clans to a successful conclusion. For the UNOSOM strategists, a change in strategy – i.e. avoiding at all costs civilian fatalities – would imply opting for ground operations rather than air attacks. But, at the same time, there would be a greater risk of exposing the 'peacekeepers' to the Aidid clan's guerrilla army. And significant losses of American soldiers would risk stirring up public opinion in the United States in favour of a withdrawal of the American contingent from Somalia.

What was most revolting was the attack on the house where there was a meeting with people from Aidid's clan and representatives from civil society who were discussing the situation. They might have been able to put pressure on Aidid to end his standoff with the UN forces and find ways out of the stalemate. It was an important meeting with around 100 people. The American helicopters were ordered to launch missiles on the house and I think there were 70 casualties.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

The Americans presented the shelling of Aidid's house as an operation against the leaders, the warlords associated with Aidid. In reality, it was a political meeting organised by Aidid in the house and many important leaders and elders were killed. One of them was one of our administrators in Merca who'd returned to Mogadishu and was participating in discussions on strategy, but clearly he was not a military man.

[...] MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, March-July 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 20 July 1993, MSF submitted an appeal "for violation of humanitarian law in Somalia during UNOSOM operations on 17 July" to the United Nations Security Council, the Military High Command, and national commands of the United Nations forces in Somalia. The appeal was announced in a press release on 27 July. All MSF sections were informed and circulated it.

'**Communication** on Violation of Humanitarian Law in Somalia During UNOSOM Operations', Médecins Sans Frontières, Sent to the United Nations Security Council, the Military High Command of the United Nations in Somalia, and National Commands of the Contingents in Somalia, 20 July 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Dear Sir,
Please find attached the text of an appeal that Médecins Sans Frontières wishes to bring to your attention. This appeal draws on the practical experience that MSF has acquired in many countries as a private humanitarian organisation working alongside peacekeeping forces, as well as on our keen awareness of the stakes of the success for the international community of international peacekeeping operations. It concerns the grave events that took place in Somalia on 17 June in terms of humanitarian law. We

hope that you will give this appeal all the attention that we feel it deserves and that you will be able to provide a response.

I) MSF denounces violations of humanitarian law during operations on 17 June 1993

The events of 17 June 1993 (described in Appendix 1) resulted in many casualties and violated several principles of humanitarian law:

1. Disregard for the immunity of medical facilities and health workers

a) The shelling of an MSF and AICF house, clearly identified as a humanitarian building, left one person dead, eight people injured – one seriously – and caused major damage to property.

The attack lasted 10 to 15 minutes and included the firing of two missiles and helicopter gunfire. The purpose and the identity of the building were known to the armed forces. According to the latest results of the investigation, available at MSF, the attack was launched after a microphone pole at the back of a vehicle parked in front of the house was mistaken for a weapon. The response appears somewhat disproportionate in relation to the nature of the virtual threat.

b) Shelling of Digfer hospital on 17 June. As a medical facility treating civilian casualties, it has immunity.

It is difficult to grasp how the hospital came to become the focal point of the hostilities, losing its immunity and becoming a target. Even if it is shown that the Somalis were first to infringe this principle, it is difficult to evaluate if the response was proportional to the threat.

2. Endangering civilians

The attacks affected civilians in districts close to the UN military operation targets, as they were not restricted to the zone that the United Nations forces had ordered to be evacuated. They spread to peripheral areas where, while the NGOs did receive prior warning, no evacuation order had been given to civilians. It is impossible to provide an accurate assessment of the number of civilians wounded or killed during the offensive. Obviously, given their lack of access to hospitals, there is no record of either.

MSF notes that the fatality and eight casualties caused by the shelling of the AICF/MSF house cannot have been recorded in any statistics. Access to hospitals is crucial in assessing the number of victims caused by military operations.

3. Impossibility for civilian casualties to access treatment and hospitals

a) There was no access to Banaadir and Digfer, the only two civilian hospitals with surgical units, on 17 June because of the deployment of United Nations armoured units. The military hospitals were requisitioned for United Nations forces exclusively, causing unacceptable discrimination among casualties. The Moroccan hospital remained open to wounded Somalis but was totally inaccessible to people living to the east of the K6/ Digfer road. What's more, given that the Moroccan forces were on the frontline of the military operations, it was hardly likely that the Somali population would have considered it an option.

b) UN medical and health coordination forces: 1/ did not communicate a plan detailing measures to be taken for the civilian population; 2/ did not circulate information regarding civilians' access to the Moroccan hospital.

As of 11 June, the ICRC, MSF, and other NGOs decided to coordinate support for civilians in the hospitals and set up emergency treatment services.

II) Operations on 17 June were under the authority of the United Nations Security Council, the military commander of the United Nations, and the commands of the national contingents

The United Nations Security Council is accountable as an international institution responsible for making plans for the application of armed force by the contingents participating in peacekeeping operations, as stated in Articles 42 and 46 of the Charter

of the United Nations. Article 42 states: "The Security Council can take action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security." Article 46 states: "Plans for the application of armed force shall be made by the Security Council with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee."
The responsibility of the military commander of the United Nations and the commands of the national contingents participating in the United Nations force ensues from the obligation to respect humanitarian law in a period of conflict.
This obligation concerns notably:
- respect for humanitarian immunity;
- wounded and sick people shall be cared for without discrimination between civilians and the military (Article 3 common to all four Geneva conventions);
- precautions to be taken in military operations during attacks (Article 57, first additional protocol to the Geneva conventions);
- duties of military commanders when using force (Article 87, first additional protocol to the Geneva conventions);
- respect for the general principle of proportionality between the threat and the means deployed in the response. This principle is particularly important when the target of an attack is a protected building, such as Digfer hospital.

III) MSF condemns the failings in setting up peacekeeping operations in relation to the requirements of humanitarian law

MSF insists on the correlation between these events and its recent experiences during United Nations international peacekeeping operations in Liberia, former Yugoslavia, and Somalia. Peacekeeping missions often hamper humanitarian aid operations, which raises the issue of the validity and respect for humanitarian law in peacekeeping operations in general. In this context, MSF wants the issues raised by the operations in Somalia on 17 June to be addressed not as an isolated incident, but more as a symptom of a situation, and is calling for the United Nations to provide an explanation of the day's events as quickly as possible.
MSF considers that several humanitarian principles were not taken into account or respected during deployment of UNOSOM's military operation. It is all the more disturbing since the military operation was intended to alleviate the suffering of the Somali civilian population and was conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, a symbol of respect for international legality, legal values of peace, and fundamental rights. And lastly, it served to create confusion within the population between humanitarian organisations and United Nations representatives. The formers' failure to respect humanitarian action principles jeopardises the universality of these principles and their application at all times and in all places, as well as the security of relief agencies.

IV) MSF has submitted a petition to those responsible

Having established the facts in dispute, the nature of the alleged violations of humanitarian law and the hierarchical responsibilities, MSF submits the following appeal:
1. Concerning the events of 17 June 1993:
a) On 17 June 1993 in Mogadishu, MSF urged the CMOC to conduct an investigation into the military operations of that day and has since demanded access to the report. So far, MSF has received no official reply to this request.
Or access to any other reports on investigations conducted by the United Nations Military Police and/or national contingents into the events.
b) MSF also demands access to the medical and health coordination plan drawn up by the armed forces for the military operation on 17 June 1993.
2. Concerning the future of humanitarian operations in Somalia, MSF demands:
a) that urban military operations do their utmost to spare civilians.

b) that the proportionality between the threat and the response be systematically respected by forces on the ground.
c) that the wounded have guaranteed access to medical treatment without discrimination.
d) that the immunity of humanitarian organisations assisting the wounded and the civilian population be respected.
3. Concerning general compatibility between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid activities, MSF demands of the United Nations that:
a) The Security Council clearly uphold the obligation to respect humanitarian law and notably the Geneva conventions and additional protocols during United Nations peacekeeping and restoration of peace operations, and includes this obligation in the resolutions mandating its international forces;
b) The sharing of responsibilities regarding respect of humanitarian law is determined between the commands of national contingents and the unified command of the United Nations;
c) A competent body is established to investigate violations of humanitarian law by national contingent members of a United Nations force and adopt sanctions;
d) The presence of impartial humanitarian organisations be accepted and respected by the mandates of the peacekeeping forces;
e) When force is used, even within the scope of a peacekeeping operation, the action of impartial humanitarian organisations can be conducted without hindrance and in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Geneva conventions.

'Statement on Somalia', **Message** from MSF France coordinator Somalia and Dominique Martin, MSF France Programme Manager for Somalia, 21 July 1993 (in English).

Extract:
You will find enclosed the essence of our position on Somalia as Dominique mentioned in the last conference call. Any objection if this is being presented as MSF's [in general]? Please respond to Dominique Martin or [the coordinator in Somalia] before Friday: the trip to the USA is scheduled for next week. You will receive in the next day(s) a copy of the appeal presented to the UN and to be circulated.
Looking forward to your remarks and ideas. Follow a draft of the press release.

'Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders Submits an Appeal to the United Nations', **Press Release**, MSF USA, 28 July 1993 (in English).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders has decided to submit an appeal to the United Nations denouncing the violation of humanitarian law committed in Mogadishu on June 17, 1993. That day, a major UN military operation was undertaken in Mogadishu while UN forces blocked access to both civilian hospitals. A UNOSOM II helicopter shelled the International Action Against Hunger (AICF) base where the MSF team was also lodged. The building was known to the armed forces and clearly marked as a humanitarian relief base. The attack, which lasted several minutes, resulted in one death and eight wounded, one critically. Later, civilian hospital Digfer in Mogadishu, which was treating the wounded, also came under fire.

MSF demands the respect of the fundamental principles of humanitarian law set forth in the Geneva Conventions and consequently denounces any violation of these principles, particularly:
• disregard for the immunity of humanitarian relief efforts
• disregard for the protection of the civilian population put at risk as neighbouring targets of UN military operations
• obstruction of access to medical assistance and hospitals without discrimination for anyone who is wounded.
MSF is currently petitioning for a thorough investigation into these events to those responsible in order to ensure that these events do not reoccur. MSF believes that the UN Security Council is to be held accountable for the shelling, as it is responsible for the UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia. These events question the validity and respect for humanitarian law during UN military operations and suggest a re-evaluation of the way peacekeeping operations are conducted. […], MSF Representative in Mogadishu, is available for interviews in Washington DC and in New York, NY.

'**Interview** with Rony Brauman', President of MSF France Board of Directors on Antenne 2's News Programme, 27 July 1993 (in French). **V17**

Extract:
Journalist: Rony Brauman, good evening, you are the President of Médecins Sans Frontières. You waited one and a half months before bringing this complaint against the UN. Did you hesitate before attacking such an important institution?
Rony Brauman: No, not at all. We just needed time to establish the facts with clarity, then put the complaint together – its drafting, translation and dispatch – so we were only ready to file the complaint officially today. But the delays were purely technical.
Journalist: There were MSF doctors in the building too. Do you think this attack was a "slip up" or deliberate?
Rony Brauman: I think it was a slip up. But a slip up with a particular twist in that it occurred in an escalating military rationale. As time passes, the United Nations has become… at the outset it was military-humanitarian, let's say. It's become less and less humanitarian and more and more military, to call a spade a spade. Yet it still carries the humanitarian label, needless to say. And little by little, through the repression of demonstrations considered threatening (and sometimes they are), reprisals against General Aidid's troops – reprisals that are understandable yet are conducted without discrimination against the civilian population too, and humanitarian organisations' headquarters, or a hospital harbouring the sick and wounded – all this is built upon a more or less blind rationale, meaning that it amounts to both a slip up and the implacable roll-out of a rationale of escalation, so that these days we have the impression that rather than being there to restore law and order, create opportunities for dialogue and humanitarian work, the UN has been reduced to the level of a Somali clan – one of many – carrying out its own war that blindly, pitilessly kills children, women and civilians.
Journalist: So specifically what needs to be done to ensure that the UN's difficulties with wearing these two hats – humanitarian and military – can be resolved?
Rony Brauman: As we've been saying since the outset, the two hats need separating. The UN's humanitarian agencies must react and deploy. We don't just want this, we call for it, urgently! We need them, they must be in the field. But the humanitarian rationale follows one path while the political rationale, and sometimes the military resources that go with it, follows another. And at this point we will avoid – not always, and obviously not with total success – but we will avoid this growing confusion that means that as things

stand, humanitarian workers in Somalia are suspected of harbouring the darkest of intentions, because at the end of the day, we start with humanitarianism and we finish with a gun.
Journalist: Has MSF pulled out of Somalia since these incidents?
Rony Brauman: Yes, we pulled out in April. And we returned at the peak of the tensions because we've still got a base in Somalia. We pulled out in part because the emergency was over – it must be said, this is a good thing – and in part because the risks, the rising tensions, ruled out any possibility of a longer-term commitment.

The plan is to submit an appeal to the Security Council to demand a control on the force they use, whether they agree or not, we want there to be limits on the use of force applied by UN forces. Until now we naively thought there were limits, but in the field the military told us: 'No, there aren't any and anyhow we have been given carte blanche to re-establish order. We're not subject to the law governing use of force. We're not soldiers. We're not at war against anyone. We calm things down.' This is inadmissible and we feel public opinion will support us on this. We are certain that this is in MSF's vital interests, for our role in carrying out humanitarian missions in this 'new world order'. In our appeal, we asked what are the rules that limit the use of force for UN forces? On the basis of the law of war, we dispute the fact that this hospital was made a military target. If they accept the appeal, it is the law of war that will apply and we dispute the fact that the attack on our building was put down to error. The weapons used are extremely precise, but what guarantees are taken when they are employed? Obviously, this complaint will be made public and journalists will catch on to it and use it. This is a powerful testimony in which we shine a light on the UN, and the Americans in particular.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor from 1991, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

We got the memo from the French section but we weren't very proactive with it. It wasn't something we were experiencing closely. Our feeling was that MSF France wasn't speaking out very loudly about it, so we weren't going to go and assemble some sort of international force to speak out. It's important to remember that at that time, due to our [internal] disputes in 1992,[18] the atmosphere wasn't very conducive to closing ranks.

Dr [...], MSF Belgium, Programme Manager, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

Even if there hadn't been a discussion, MSF France would have gone ahead anyway. But I think there was a discussion at the international level and that they didn't think there was any problem. I'd say it remained pretty confidential. It was important, but outside of France there wasn't any impact, nobody was speaking about MSF's appeal. There were maybe a few testimonies at the time the house was bombed, saying, 'These American bombings are a total scandal.' But all this was, in my opinion, quite counterproductive because at that time, according to the Americans, it was a case of 'Every man for himself, we're out of

18. See part II: "Famine Alert".

here.' So by saying, 'GIs fired at us,' MSF could only reinforce this 'every man for himself' message, since the people could only wonder, 'How awful, let's get the hell out of here.'

Dr Alain Destexhe, MSF International, General Secretary 1991-1995, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

An information campaign on the appeal was led among the actors concerned at the UN and in the member countries, in particular among the USA senators, with the support of MSF's USA office. In Somalia, Patrick Vial, who represented MSF there for three months, was also speaking in defence of the appeal to the various actors and authorities.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 23 July 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: The UN continues to hold a very tough line, causing the violence to escalate. Following the serious incidents in July when the USA targeted AICF's house and a civilian hospital, the American Senate is planning a hearing. MSF is trying to get an invitation, following the appeal submitted to the United Nations denouncing its failure to respect the Geneva conventions. [The coordinator] is going to New York to prepare her arguments. For the first time, the American press is printing criticism on the UN's conduct.
Two expats are presently in Somalia. A surgical team left in late June. The reactions are extremely xenophobic in Mogadishu and we need to remain very attentive to the security of our teams there.

'**Status Report** on Communications on Somalia', MSF France Coordinator in Somalia, 24 July 1993 (in French).

Extract:
IMMEDIATE ACTIONS
France:
• French government: In the meetings with the government, Dominique Martin spoke, among other subjects, on the Somali problem, and made our positions clear. A copy of the appeal was sent to several ministers: Defence, Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, Elysée, etc.
• Press: A press release will be sent by Communications, Monday 26. A copy of the appeal will be sent to key journalists. [...] Interviews have been done with Antenne 2 (broadcast on the news on Saturday 17 July), *La Croix* (published Thursday 22), and *Libération* (various articles in July) by [the MSF France coordinator] and Sud Ouest by Patrick. Dominique's text is still available for a paper to find.
United Nations:
• The text of the appeal was sent to New York from Paris on 19 or 20 and to Mogadishu with Patrick Vial (week of 19).
• Geneva: Some contact and informal conversations already took place in early July [...] with people at the DHA [UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs] in Geneva to encourage

the DHA to take a position, which [UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan] Eliasson ended up doing recently. We will try to find out who succeeded in prompting him to choose his stance.

• New York: A few visits have been organised with UN agencies and the secretary general in New York for the week of 2 August [...].

• Nairobi: Similarly Patrick will step up meetings in Moga and Nairobi.

USA: The text of the appeal was sent to the special representative in Moga, but also to the United States to various senators, congressmen, administrations, and interested groups.

• Senate: There is no intention to bring participants outside the administration to the hearing on 29 July. However, a few meetings with individual senators have been organised for the week of 26 July ([MSF France coordinator] and Chantal [Firino-Martell, Executive Director of MSF USA]).

• Congress: It's not yet certain whether we are going to be able to participate in the hearing with Congress, but nevertheless we (Chantal and [MSF France coordinator]) are going to meet congressmen in this same week, and Chantal has received our statement, and our report was sent to all the members of both committees looking at the question.

• Administration: Of course, meeting with USAID/State Department [MSF France coordinator]/Chantal).

• Press: *The New York Times* has just printed a critical article on the positions similar to those held by Médecins Sans Frontières. Dominique's article, translated into English by MSF USA, has more chance of being picked up by other media if the press opens up. MSF USA will send a press release next week and will organise press coverage (Chantal). Some interviews might be possible ([MSF France coordinator]).

• Other: Other meetings with NGOs and human rights organisations ([MSF France coordinator]).

Europe: All MSF sections have received a copy of this appeal. They are arranging to communicate independently. MSF Spain has already sent a press release on the humanitarian impasse in Mogadishu and will publish a press release on the appeal. MSF International could deal with communications with the EC. A copy of the appeal will be submitted to the European Community in Nairobi.

Question: Even if nothing in particular is done in Holland and Belgium (cf. memo from Jules Pieters and telephone call from Georges Dallemagne), Amsterdam and Brussels are the gateways into the Scandinavian countries and Canada, where this appeal should be made public. Who's in charge of this? MSF International? The sections?

OTHER ACTIONS

Populations in Danger [PD] will give a second, colder forum. The Somalia text for *Populations in Danger* will be given to François [Jean] by [the MSF France coordinator] for a final edit. The cross-functional articles and debates at the PD colloquium will address the question. The international publication will include a section on Somalia containing the main elements of the summer communications surrounding the events on 17 June. The article should be sent to MSF Europe on 10 August ([MSF France coordinator]).

'Somalia USA Activities and Status Report, July 27-August 9 1993', Washington and New York, **Report** by MSF France Coordinator in Somalia, sent to MSF presidents, executive directors, desks, and directors of communication, 9 August 1993 (in English).

Extract:

Thanks to the help and support of the MSF USA team, the MSF position on the course of events in Somalia has been made widely visible in Washington and New York, as well as the appeal presented to the United Nations on violations of the Geneva conventions.

Our voice has been heard everywhere, along with the more discreet one of ICRC and the report of African Rights has been read. You can judge by yourself the wide panel of contacts we made (see the interview list). All congressmen and senators of committees charged with the Somalia issue got copies of our appeal, as well as all public attending the hearings, all members of the security councils, human rights advocates, selected NGOs and consortiums, and of course a large selection of actors in the UN Secretariat, UN PKO [Peacekeeping Operations], UN DHA, the Pentagon, and the US State Department.

Until August 8th however it did not make the headlines of the media. As Bosnia was taking all the space, there was simply no space for Somalia in producers/editors mind. However the events of August 8 in Mogadishu (the killing by mine of four US soldiers) have brought forward to the media's agenda the Somalia issue. Unfortunately, the top of the debate is more 'should we stay/should we get out?' than anything of more value to us.

So far we had encountered this debate in more private circles in Washington, and found out neither party of the debate had any interest in bringing public our argument. The pro-stayers want the issue to be dealt with privately (even if they agree it is an issue, mistakes were made etc.); the pro-leavers are arguing on the basis of US lives being lost for nothing in Somalia, and are not in favor of picturing US military as responsible for its own problems.

In all the circles, we go we meet people who think what's happening now is the basis on which to guide the development of future peace enforcement operations and that every critical objection is a contribution to better future implementation. Unfortunately, the power plays are in favor of inertia where the US/UN intervention course in Somalia is concerned (or so it appears, see annex C) except for American public pressure, which could push the congressmen and senators to challenge the Pentagon.

In brief, conclusions would be that there is no space for doubting the validity of humanitarian-military interventions, that we've done our best to give tools to those who could influence the process short term in Mogadishu and long term in the UN structure, but that it feels there is no momentum yet for a real commitment to act quickly on lessons learnt in June and July.

This report details the people contacted during these two weeks, their background and their comments and starts with two pages of conclusions drawn from the meetings [...]

4) The debate

There is clearly NO space for a debate on the validity of mixing military and humanitarian. Though the more you get into the different logics of the players the more you do feel that's where the key problem is.

Personal opinion: It is not just a political incapacity that led to the confrontation between UN and Aideed that ended up in the massacre of the Pakistanis. It is first and foremost, I believe, the idea that the UN sets and drives the political process the direction it decides upon, and does not conceive that their role is the facilitation of a process agreed upon by the Somalis. Aideed was signing a peace agreement, driving a process his way in a

direction that displeased the UN/US (as it did not integrate Bashir… America's *poulain* [darling]?).
May I also make reference to the US statements referring to the values driving their commitment: democracy and market economics. They know what they want and don't want to see in Somalia. In other words, they have a political stand which the UN adopts and there's nothing bad with that if a cat is called a cat. They are doing political enforcement in Somalia. The mixing of this with a humanitarian objective is the problem. Humanitarian morale appeals seem to be today, the only workable substitution concept to former ideologies. The inevitability of the use of humanitarian excuses to proceed with military operations is obvious, and the only debate in the US is that of "how can we improve these operations?"
5) [L]egal or structural aspects of interventions, as conceived in Chapter 7 [of the UN Charter].
I insisted a lot in all of my meetings on the Checks and Control mechanisms:
1. Independent evaluation mission
Boutros relies on Howe and the Security Council on Boutros and eventually their military commanders in Somalia (no political or humanitarian feedback).
2. Recourse mechanisms locally
For us humanitarian organisations we turn to DHA, but DHA is not being listened to. For the Somalis there is no way of reporting their complaint, therefore no way to check and stop excesses, no way for them to see the UN as an impartial mechanism.
3. Recourse mechanisms internationally
Nothing is built into the system to stop a free spinning wheel. Only a member country can charge the Security Council, but since the members of the Security Council are both the legislators and for some part of the executive power where is the independent judiciary?
As you can imagine, these ideas are well received but nobody seems to go and pick up the ball to get them implemented urgently. It's a general feeling of euphoria and anxiety on a new toy that we got to play with the Chapter 7, but it's on nobody's agenda (or nobody powerful enough) to fix its loose ends ASAP.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 27 August 1993 (in French).

Extract:
[MSF France coordinator]'s talk on the errors ensuing from the American actions in Somalia has been fully understood, contrary to the message on the humanitarian-military amalgam that is shaping up to be a dialogue of the deaf: the American politicians, with the French government, have concluded that what is required is to work better and more effectively with the NGOs.

When I returned to Paris, I said, 'The UN wrapped it up as a humanitarian gift and is in the process of ruining everything: this needs to be stopped. We need to go and see everybody.' At head office, everyone agreed to take action, but when I passed through a few weeks later nothing had happened. I realised that at MSF, things only happen when it's the person who experienced the events and has the motivation who pushes the issue and takes action. You can't wait around for someone else to take an interest. So, I cancelled my holidays and I went to the US where I did the rounds: Congress, the Senate, the press, etc to try and get them to change their approach.

The response from the United Nations was, 'The system is such that we can't stop it since it is the secretary general's envoy who decides everything.' At the time, we didn't really have access to Boutros-Ghali and anyhow, I'm convinced that he wouldn't have got involved. Then I went to Washington. At the time, they were in the process of preparing a session at the Senate on Somalia. But they didn't get me to testify. Maybe because I was too passionate, too impetuous, not mature enough? Or maybe because my opinion didn't go in the direction they wanted their testimonies to go in? Nonetheless, I went to see all the senators to give them a briefing. The murder in Aidid's building made no noise in the United States. But the day before I left, while we were still fighting to get coverage in the media, two American soldiers were blown up by a mine in Somalia. Suddenly, a major international news programme, the MacNeil/Lehrer Report[19]*, agreed to interview MSF. I wasn't very well prepared and I was completely unsettled by the way the question was put to me: 'If our soldiers are blown up by mines when they have gone to Somalia to feed children, it makes no sense for them to stay. Shouldn't we get out of there?' I replied something along the lines of, 'But that's not the point, the point is more how we should do things better than whether we should pull out.' And I criticised the violent abuses. I had three minutes to speak about an issue that for months hadn't been developed in any media whatsoever, and had in fact been presented from an angle that had nothing to do with the actual situation. I had the impression I was living a virtual reality, which had nothing to do with Somalia. How can you set the record straight in the space of three minutes on a news programme with a fairly complicated message, which goes something like, 'Careful, we are in the process of making violence. But we need to stay there even if this comes with risks.'*

The American public had no public information on the violent abuses committed by its soldiers who all of a sudden were being perceived as victims. Plus, when they carried out their operation, they didn't take many risks, and that's really how come we got bombed, they were so scared about taking risks, they fired at everything and anything. So in the United States, there was absolutely no understanding of what the arrival or withdrawal of troops in a country like that meant.

[...] MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, March-July 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

The operations were over, we were finalising the mission's closure. I stayed in July, August, and some of September with the purpose of observing what was going on. At least twice a week I went to see the special representative of the United Nations and his American councillors to tell them, 'Listen we've submitted an appeal, we need to hand over some documents and we want answers to our questions.' We asked very specific questions on the respect of certain legal provisions. I lobbied, but I was facing a brick wall. The American advisors were very polite towards us. They said, 'We're working on the report, we understand.' But they didn't really follow up on things in Somalia.

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

In mid-September 1993, MSF introduced a second appeal, this one to the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, which did not succeed.

19. Evening news programme on the Public Broadcasting Service television channel (USA), recognised for its detailed coverage.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 15 September 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Rony: Situation in Somalia – Introduction of a second appeal to the UN. This time to the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and not as an application to have the UN reconsider its decision. Consequently, there is the possibility of an appeal before the competent court, i.e. the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Historically, this would be a major first. Given the complex nature of the affair, we obviously need highly specialised experts advising us. Similarly, it has been agreed that this kind of initiative wouldn't be taken without having first notified the other MSF sections.

The chiefs of staff of the forces involved in Somalia and their respective defence ministers, with the exception of those of the United States, who remained silent, responded to MSF's appeal with a flat refusal. However, the complaint made its way through the UN's political-military bodies.
On 5 August 1993, the US daily *The Washington Post* reported on an internal report in the legal department of the United Nations on Somalia, severely criticising the attack by the US forces on 12 July on the house sheltering Somali elders. According to this report, 'leaked' by employees unhappy with the UN's actions in Somalia, this attack raised important questions at both a legal and a human rights level. Later, another confidential report established that the use of force was disproportionate and represented an act of vengeance, illegal with regard to the law of war.
The appeal also prompted a debate and discussion within the United Nations, which ensured that peacekeeping forces would be recognised as combatant forces subject to the law of war and not as an international police force with broader rights. After this, the rules of engagement, to which these forces were subject, were consequently revised.

'U.N. Report Criticizes Military Tactics of Somalia Peacekeepers', ***The Washington Post*** (USA), Keith B. Richburg, 5 August 1993 (in English).

Extract:
An internal report by the United Nations' legal office in Somalia has sharply criticized the July 12 American-led helicopter attack on a Somali leader's compound, saying the world body has a "moral" and "legal" obligation not to kill people - even in Somalia's combat-like conditions - before offering them a chance to surrender. The three-page report focused on a U.N. attack by U.S. Cobra gunships that fired antitank missiles and cannons into a strategy meeting of key advisers to fugitive militia leader Mohamed Farah Aideed in Mogadishu, the Somali capital. Several of Aideed's commanders were killed in the raid, which U.N. officials said was timed to wipe out a "key terrorist cell" plotting ambush attacks against U.N. peace keepers, including Americans, in Somalia [...]
But the report, prepared by the U.N. Justice Division in Somalia the day after the helicopter assault, raised what it called "important legal and human rights issues" about the attack. It asked whether the United Nations should target individuals and "whether the United Nations should hold itself to a higher standard of conduct" in what originally was a humanitarian mission to protect food supplies in Somalia. "We believe as a matter of policy, short prior notice of a destruction of a building with humans inside must be

given," the report stated. "From the legal, moral, and human rights perspective, we counsel against conducting military operations that give no notice of attack to occupants of buildings." [...]
The report, considered sensitive within the U.N. bureaucracy, was given to *The Washington Post* by U.N. employees who said they have grown disillusioned with the course of the world body's military campaign against Aideed and his militia. Disenchantment over the direction of the Somalia operation and mounting civilian casualties there is known to be widespread within the U.N. staff. This feeling has been particularly strong among workers in the humanitarian section of the United Nations who believe the military has subordinated their aid efforts in its six-week hunt for Aideed. Howe ordered the militia leader arrested for his suspected role in the killings of U.N. peace keepers. The report is likely to keep alive the debate over the U.N. methods and practices in Somalia's ongoing guerrilla war [...]
The lull in U.N. military actions in Mogadishu also is attributed to sensitivity within the world body to the outcry after the helicopter attack. Criticism mounted from Somalis, from relief agencies, and from within the United Nations, where many charged that the assault was an unnecessary provocation and turned the world body into another belligerent faction in Somalia's civil war. The U.N. report said the operation in Somalia was "applying military methods traditionally found in declared war/combat areas without a U.N. declaration of war/combat." It said the assault created "unnecessary hostility" that "dramatically" increased the danger to relief workers and foreign journalists in the capital.

Our process is like the colour indicator, i.e. we enter the complaint into the system and then we see where it ends up, we'll take our coloured marker and show the channels it passed through. The chiefs of staff and the national defence ministers are sending us flat refusals, confirming that they're not concerned. The Americans aren't even responding. And it wasn't making a lot of noise at the United Nations, but what happened was particularly inadmissible. An expert committee was appointed within the Secretariat. It investigated the circumstances in which these events took place and drafted a confidential report, a copy of which I managed to get hold of. This report created a bit of a scandal internally because it was quite tough. It stated that the force was employed illegitimately and disproportionately, and that these acts are more likened to acts of vengeance than a legal use of force within the framework of the United Nations. They use the word "vengeance", yet vengeance isn't in the list of uses of forces authorised by the law of war. They could have used disproportionate reprisals, reprisals being a lawful act according to the law of war. But vengeance, here, is something totally inadmissible, totally illegal.
Moreover, the only rules that really restrict the use of force are those in the law of war, the Geneva conventions, that apply to armed forces. For police forces, there isn't any international law that restricts the use of force. Following our appeal, a debate went on for practically two years within the United Nations on whether the peacekeeping forces are combatant forces and therefore subject to the law of war, humanitarian law, or if, being an international police force, they are not combatant forces under the law of war and therefore not subject to the Geneva conventions.
Those who uphold the second definition put forward the idea that the United Nations is not a Nation and therefore cannot sign the Geneva conventions. However, they encompass forces that all belong to national contingents and which have, in principle, all signed the Geneva conventions. So it's only within the framework of the United Nations that these soldiers would have the right to commit war crimes! They insist on arguing that we can't agree to putting limits on the use of force, to allow the peacekeeping forces to be criticised, otherwise it would

open the door to all kinds of abuse. Extremists will go as far as accusing us of sabotage. Like everyone, as soon as you are asked to respect certain things, you worry about being blamed for the wrong reasons, being manipulated. But others admit that the rules of engagement need to be made more precise, acknowledged and debated. This controversy is ultimately clear-cut and within the peacekeeping operations department, new rules of engagement have been drafted that now apply to all countries, all operations. One sentence indicates that the United Nations' forces are subject to humanitarian conventions the moment they are engaged as a fighting force.
If it hadn't been us, this debate would still have had to have taken place at some time or other. We set the tone as aggressive. It wasn't at all appropriate to dispute the way the Security Council uses force, that was extremely disrespectful. Later I learned that this appeal was studied at Harvard University: 'MSF against the United Nations Security Council.'

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor from 1991, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

I don't think we can believe that this appeal set a legal precedent because the proceedings didn't come to an end. If precedent is understood to mean the fact that you can't bomb a hospital and the compound of an aid organisation, as was the case in Somalia, and recognised as a principle of international law, then yes. But, what was the practical consequence? The UN wasn't condemned for this crime, there was no punishment, no penalty, no fine.

Dr Alain Destexhe, MSF International, General Secretary 1991-1995, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 13 August 1993, 26 NGOs working in Somalia publicly criticised the direction taken by UNOSOM II, highlighting the ethical and legal issues raised by its actions.

'Somalia: Humanitarian Organisations Criticise the UN', ***Le Monde***/**AFP** (France), 13 August 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Twenty-six non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in Somalia have criticised, in a press release issued on Wednesday 10 August to the Secretary General of the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the military position taken by the United Nations mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II). "Several actions undertaken by UNOSOM raise serious ethical and legal questions, particularly those that took place on 17th June and 12th July," write the NGOs. Several dozen civilians were killed during these actions taken against General Mohamed Farrah Aidid. "The use of military force erodes the confidence required to support peacekeeping initiatives and dialogue," the text continues. Moreover, an unknown group, the Somali Islamist Salvation Movement, claimed responsibility on Wednesday for the attack on Sunday that killed four American soldiers. Seven supporters of General Aidid were killed on Tuesday by gunfire from one of UNOSOM's American Cobra helicopters, in the south of Mogadishu, after having attempted to bring down a helicopter, announced a spokesperson for UNOSOM. "There isn't any reason for us to doubt that these were fighters from Aidid's clan," he specified.

While two months earlier, on 18 June 1993, the US President Bill Clinton had declared that the operation in Somalia had "ended" and was a success, on 22 August, the US leaders decided to send a unit of rangers to Somalia and announced that General Aidid needed to be "eliminated from the Somali equation".
On 25 August, the secretary general of the United Nations released the results of an investigation demonstrating that the attack on 5 June 1993 against the Pakistani Blue Berets was carried out by the forces under General Aidid. General Aidid was now liable for legal prosecution. As the attacks against the UN forces were increasing, UNOSOM was launching a new helicopter operation in the Digfer hospital region, where the home of General Aidid was located.
Also on 30 August, the aid association AICF denounced the use of its premises by the UNOSOM II forces for an operation aiming to capture local personnel tasked with providing security for the neighbouring premises used by the UNDP.

'President Clinton: The Operation in Somali has "Ended" and is "A Success"', **AFP** (France), Washington, 18 June 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The United Nations' armed operation in Somalia "has ended and is a success", announced President Bill Clinton on Thursday evening in an introductory statement made at a press conference held at the White House. The US president, based on a report from Commander of the US Army Forces Command, General Colin Powell, confirmed that the military potential of the Somali clan chief Mohamed Farrah Aidid had been "obliterated".

'Washington, Which is Sending Commandos to Somalia, Wants to Hunt Down General Aidid', **AFP** (France), Washington, 24 August 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The decision by the United States to send additional commandos to Somalia was made while Washington is increasing its accusations against warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid, whose arrest has been ordered by the UN. However, the administration under President Bill Clinton, whose leaders confirmed Wednesday, under the cover of anonymity, the decision to send 400 rangers to Mogadishu, abstained from presenting this deployment as the start of a manhunt for General Aidid, who is hiding in the crowded suburbs in the south of the city [...]
The coordinator of the State Department for Somalia, David Shinn, explained that the warlord needed to be "eliminated from the Somali equation". He even intimated that to make this happen they needed to call on troops with a wide experience of street combat in a particularly hostile environment, a fitting description of the southern suburbs of Mogadishu which are, according to him, made up of narrow streets that are dangerous to explore. *The Washington Post* reported on Tuesday morning that, "Rangers are an elite infantry specialised in secret missions that are out of the ordinary."
The UN issued an arrest mandate against General Aidid, and offered a reward of US$25,000 (over 145,000 FF) to anyone that could help lead to his arrest following the ambush on 5 June in Mogadishu that left 24 Pakistani Blue Berets dead. The United States have their own reasons for trying to apprehend or even physically eliminate the rebel chief. Washington believes General Aidid's supporters are responsible for a series of attacks against the American contingent in Somalia [...]

What appears to be a decision to send men who may have a chance to hunt down General Aidid is at the very least a hitch in the disengagement strategy for American troops in Somalia. President Bush had himself set the date of the final withdrawal to… last January.

'Helicopter Operation in Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 30 August 1993 (in French).

Extract:
On Monday before dawn, some 20 United Nations helicopters launched an operation in the area surrounding Digfer hospital in Mogadishu, where journalists saw commandos drop to the ground by rope and several aircraft land and then head to the capital's airport. Journalists heard explosions, but the soldiers' arrival did not appear to prompt gunfire from the Somalis. Cobra combat helicopters flew over the hospital while other aircraft patrolled nearby. This is the first operation launched by the United Nations in Somalia (UNOSOM II) since the arrival in Mogadishu, last week, of a contingent of 400 US rangers dispatched by the United States to support the Blue Berets. […]
Last week, UNOSOM II distributed flyers in Mogadishu inviting the managers of Digfer hospital to hand over any arms found in the district or face armed reprisals. The hospital Director, Mohamed Fuji, replied that there weren't any arms in the area and that, even if there were, they had no jurisdiction there.

'Its Premises Used to Lead an Attack in Mogadishu, AICF Criticised the Last American Operation in Somalia', ***Le Monde***/**AFP**/**Reuters**, 30 August 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The aid organisation International Action Against Hunger (AICF) criticised, on Monday 30 August, the American military operation in Mogadishu led, in its opinion, from the headquarters of humanitarian organisations in Somalia. "On Monday 30 August 1993, at three o'clock in the morning, a group of 30 to 40 American soldiers landed on the roof of the AICF building in Mogadishu. This "routine cleansing" operation from the AICF offices was intended to capture local personnel in charge of the security of the UNDP buildings, allegedly supporters of General Aidid, announced the organisation in a press release. "Between 03:00h and 04.30h, the time when the American forces are in retreat, the AICF expatriates were confined in the building, some of the local AICF staff were tied up and imprisoned during the operation, and a part of the AICF's surrounding wall and the entrance to the encampment were deliberately destroyed using explosives," she explained.

The AICF demanded a meeting "as soon as possible" with the United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "in order to clarify the conditions under which force can be used by troops engaged in peacekeeping missions." The military spokesperson for the UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), Commander David Stockwell, announced in Mogadishu on Monday that the American soldiers had "searched the right buildings" during an "effective mission", the purpose of which he refused to specify. Regarding the arrest of eight UNDP employees (Le Monde, 31 August), he said, "the UNDP employees shouldn't have been in this building." During this operation, the American forces intended

to sweep a zone in the south of Mogadishu believed to be a bastion for Mohamed Farrah Aidid's supporters.

In early September 1993, Rony Brauman, the President of MSF France Board of Directors, published an essay entitled 'Somalia: A Humanitarian Crime', which assessed the international armed intervention in Somalia and qualified it as a "humanitarian crime".

'Somalia: A Humanitarian Crime', Rony Brauman, **Editions Arléa** (France), September 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Let it be said at the outset: few of us were thrilled by the announcement that an American landing in Somalia was imminent. We were not persuaded by the chorus of praise that greeted the UN's historic decision and the emergence of the first humanitarian army, calling it "a fantastic step forward" towards the right to intervention on humanitarian grounds. At the time, the press rightly pointed out that as early as 1988, French President Mitterrand had spoken at the United Nations of the international community's "profound obligation" to assist peoples in danger, even if this meant violating the sacrosanct Article II of the United Nations Charter (which establishes the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state). To us, however, the exception made in the name of solidarity for Somalia seemed insufficient grounds for declaring that international relations would no longer be governed by the balance of power and calculation of national interest. The proponents of intervention, however, insisted that the intentions of the western countries were "pure". In Afghanistan, Iraq, and Vietnam, humanitarian relief efforts had, in the course of easing the distress of the victims, been used to denounce totalitarian regimes. Nothing like that could happen, it was said, in a country that raised as few political or ideological issues as Somalia, "Utter destitution on the one hand and pure pity on the other – the West wants to save Somalia for the sake of saving Somalia, and nothing more."

Those whom the Gulf War had not yet convinced that a new international moral order had come into being were to wait and see. After Operations 'Desert Storm' and 'Provide Comfort', Operation 'Restore Hope' offered the prospect of an action so obviously disinterested and so spectacularly effective that it would necessarily be approved by all. In this dismal period, it offered a substantial glimmer of hope in a devastated country, and as such ought to be praised out of common propriety alone. But 300,000 deaths and a year and a half of near-complete indifference seemed to us reason enough not to cry victory too soon.

Our reservations, which were strengthened by the conventional thinking and premature enthusiasm we witnessed, soon turned to stupefaction and then to outrage when, a few months later, the United Nations' forces allowed themselves to be caught up in a spiral of violence in which civilians were the primary victims. The "international humanitarian order" began to look like a bad western, with a reward offered for the capture of the bad guy, cavalry charges, and a trigger-happy lawman with very bad aim.

It is not our intention, however, to make the case against the principle of armed intervention. Violence is never just, of course, but we all know that it can be necessary and that the decision to use force is one of a democratic government's weightiest responsibilities. In late 1992, the situation had deteriorated to the point where the deployment of an international force was justified. Many Somalis even saw it as their last hope. The violence, which was both a cause and a consequence of the collapse of the state, had engendered and sustained famine among the population. At this stage of social disintegration, there were few options left to choose from. As for whether the UN or the United States should have been in command, that was indeed an important question, but one we are not competent to judge.

Rather, what is at issue here is the military option initiated in the fall of 1992; the deliberate renunciation of any other strategy, as indicated by the fact that the UN's first Special Envoy, Mohamed Sahnoun, was bypassed and subsequently ousted; and the general acceptance of a caricatured view of Somalia as a tragic face-off between a swarm of starving children and hordes of drug-crazed looters, or as a wasteland where gangs of crazed teenagers and warlords-without-a-cause rampaged under the helpless, desperate eyes of relief workers. Admittedly, the Somalis did little to contradict this reductive view, but the point is that, apart from the interlude represented by Ambassador Sahnoun's policy (to which we will return), the terms of intervention in their country were decided without the slightest knowledge of or concern for their society [...]

Not so very long ago, humanitarian relief had its detractors, its avowed enemies who waved the standard of justice and decried that of charity. At the time, the "morality of emergency relief" served a useful purpose by unifying all those who did not seek to justify their failure to act by promises of a brilliant future. Today, the humanitarian movement needs to be wary of its many supporters who have become the apostles of armed solidarity: with friends like these, it will soon no longer need enemies.

In Somalia, for the first time, people were killed under the banner of humanitarian relief. They were not killed by accident, but during operations conducted by professional armies, and not killed in self-defence, but rather in raids conducted for the sake of vengeance. Bosnia showed us what the law is reduced to when one tries to enforce it without using force: a formidable illusion. Somalia shows, if such an illustration were needed, what becomes of force when it forgets the law: a criminal injustice.

'Aid Boss Slams US, UN', **AFP** (France), Paris, 3 October 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The head of the European charity Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) has accused the United Nations and the United States of committing a "humanitarian crime" in Somalia. MSF president Rony Brauman charged that the international body and the US armed forces had turned the Horn of Africa nation into a testbed for the "creation of a permanent military intervention force." The US-led operation, Restore Hope, launched last December to protect food and other relief supplies for the starving nation and handed over to the United Nations in May, has led to a "spiral of violence," Mr Brauman said in a 30-page declaration. The priority of emergency assistance had been overtaken by the "right of vengeance," with repeated and bloody raids against Somali civilians in strikes to punish Mogadishu militiamen for attacks on UN troops, he said. "For

the first time, in Somalia, people are killing under the banner of humanitarian aid," Mr Brauman said.

On 27 September 1993, at the end of a UN/NGO meeting on security, Patrick Vial, MSF France's coordinator in Somalia, told a journalist that he was going to pack his bags and that, in his opinion, MSF France was going to have nothing more to do with Somalia.
The following day, 28 September, a telegram confirmed that he announced MSF's permanent withdrawal during the meeting, during which he handed out a text explaining that MSF prefers not to be associated with the UN's military operation.

'Relief Group Blasts UN, Pulls Out of Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Marie Joannidis, Mogadishu, 28 September 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The French charity Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) pulled out of Mogadishu Monday, saying the city had become "too dangerous" and strongly criticizing the United Nations. MSF official Patrick Vial told a meeting of UN personnel and representatives of other non-governmental agencies that the charity was pulling out "for good," after suspending field activities in May. He distributed tracts saying that the UN operation in Somalia had lost sight of its humanitarian mission and was engaged in a "UN military operation that MSF prefers not to be associated with."
"Decisions are of a military nature and priority is given to the troops, without respect for relief workers," Vial said. "Things have deteriorated very badly. Today there is no room for humanitarian activity." MSF teams moved into Somalia in January, 1991. U.S. troops entered in December, 1992, to help protect famine relief supplies. Forces loyal to warlord Mohamed Farrah Aideed on Monday clashed anew with UN troops, in an abortive bid to prevent the reopening of the first law court to operate in Mogadishu since the outbreak of the civil war.
Separately, two Pakistani soldiers serving with the UN were wounded, one seriously, when their armored personnel carriers came under attack, a UN spokesman said. Mortar shells and rocket-propelled grenades rained down on UN headquarters as Mogadishu residents waited for the UN response to Saturday's downing of a U.S. helicopter that killed three U.S. crewmen. UN officials said they and Somali court officials were "ambushed by an intense barrage" after ceremonies at the nearby court building. A U.S. Cobra helicopter near the prison fired its 20-mm guns at a building from where light arms and rocket-propelled grenades were being fired.

On that same day, 28 September 1993, Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, confirmed this departure to Reuters, explaining that the humanitarian needs had diminished and that the UN's military operations made it more dangerous for aid organisations to work there. For its part, MSF Belgium announced to the press that it would continue its missions in Somalia, in Kismayo.

'Médecins Sans Frontières France Leaves Somalia', **Reuters** (UK), Paris, 28 September 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The French branch of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Tuesday it had pulled its last worker out of Somalia, saying humanitarian needs had diminished and United Nations peacekeepers made it less safe to work there. "The positive reason is that the urgent needs are now very limited," said Rony Brauman, President of the medical charity. "The local structures can take care of the needs without great difficulty." The negative reason, Brauman said, was that U.N. forces had made life difficult for expatriates by launching "blind reprisals" against local factions. "The increasingly military nature of the U.N. operation has made things very difficult for humanitarian groups," he said. "The hostilities by the U.N. forces have led to most expatriates being viewed as invaders."
Brauman said MSF France removed its operational personnel in May, briefly sending a surgical team back in June. It then asked its former Somalia coordinator to go back to Somalia in July to decide whether the group should return. Weighing the more limited needs against the growing risks, he decided that the group should stay away for the time being and left Somalia on Monday, Brauman said. [...]
MSF France is independent of the Belgian group of the same name, whose personnel remain in Somalia, Brauman said.

'Belgian Aid Group to Stay in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Brussels, 27 September 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The Belgian branch of the medical aid group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said Monday it would remain in Somalia unlike the French section which has decided to pull out because of threats to foreigners. MSF-Belgium, which has eight workers in the southern town of Kismayo, would remain there because "the situation there is not comparable with that in Mogadishu," where hundreds have died in battles between U.N. troops and forces of renegade clan leader Mohamed Farah Aideed. The French branch announced it was pulling out of Somalia because needs there were no longer so urgent and because it did not want to rely on security provided by the United Nations.

It was a mission that was becoming more and more bogged down and had very little of anything humanitarian about it anymore. The food situation was getting a bit better, so we decided to close our centres. We had the feeling that we had very little else to do in the face of these humanitarian-military outpourings, but we needed to keep a foot in there just in case. I was there to monitor the situation and represent MSF. I was on my own with some of my old guards. I went to the UN meetings with the NGOs. It was a bit of a horror show. The Americans continued to shoot into the crowds, to confront Aidid's supporters hiding in Mogadishu.
At the end of two and a half weeks, I thought, 'We are only observing and somehow even endorsing this situation.' And then at the end of a meeting where there were as many journalists as humanitarian workers and military, one journalist for AFP said, 'What are you going to do?' I replied, 'Pack my bag. MSF France doesn't really have any more need to stay here in this situation. We absolutely don't want anything to do with this kind of humanitarian abuse.' I was critical, although I wanted to avoid making a sensational announcement and dramatising

the situation. And the next day an AFP bulletin was released with the headline 'MSF leaves Somalia.'
At MSF we agreed that we weren't going to maintain a presence in Mogadishu and to shut down shop. But I didn't receive any instruction to make any untimely announcements, and more to the point I didn't have any intention to do so. It just happened like that. I was very careless speaking to a journalist from AFP who I knew and not thinking she'd report it. In Paris, some were happy but others really weren't. When I returned several months later, they said to me, 'It was great hearing the voices from the field.'

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 3 October 1993, the United Nations forces, reinforced by US commandos, launched a vast operation in Mogadishu against the troops led by General Aidid, who publicly demanded "a stop to the massacre of Somalis". The operation was a fiasco for the UN forces, and led to significant civilian losses. Somalis paraded the bodies of US soldiers and humiliated a pilot they had captured, in front of the international media.

'General Aidid's Movement Demands President Clinton to Stop the "Massacre of Somalis"', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 4 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The movement led by Mohamed Farrah Aidid, the target of the vast operation launched Sunday by the United Nations forces, demanded US President Bill Clinton and the international community to stop "the massacre of Somalis", announcing on Monday that several hundred civilians – men, women, and children – have been killed.
The leader of the SNA (Somali National Alliance), Abdullahi Hassan Firimbi, and Head of External Relations, Mohamed Siad Issa, who managed to escape at the moment of the attack, announced to the AFP that the bodies of seven Americans were still inside the combat zones and they were prepared to hand them over to the UN. [...] On Monday, the American Military spokesman David Stockwell confirmed the death of five Americans whose bodies had been retrieved, admitting that other soldiers had been reported missing. [...] A Somali cameraman working for a foreign TV station was injured when an American helicopter fired at a property where he was located on Monday morning.

'Mogadishu Awaits the American Retaliation', **AFP** (France), Marie Joannidis, Mogadishu, 5 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The Americans, who have suffered more human and material losses in one day (Sunday) than in 10 months' presence in Somalia, were expecting emergency reinforcements to arrive on Tuesday to strengthen their show of strength against Mohamed Farrah Aidid's supporters. The show of force, engaged for several months in Mogadishu between the US and General Aidid's supporters, highlighted, following an impressive 15 hours of fighting, the vulnerability of the Americans both in the air and on the ground.

The Somali capital now awaits the response from the United States, where public opinion risks not being able to take for much longer the images showing the distress of a captured pilot or Somalis bragging next to the bodies of American soldiers. The latest official reports from the UN spokesperson announce at least 12 American dead, 76 wounded, some of which seriously, a small number of missing soldiers, and one captured pilot, nearly totalling a third of the 300-400 rangers, the elite troops of the rapid reaction force, infantrymen, and pilots. [...]
The United States, which decided to send reinforcements, both human and material, are also faced with missing or imprisoned soldiers, a problem haunting them since the Vietnam War [...].
General Aidid's movement, the SNA (Somali National Alliance) has reported capturing one pilot, now confirmed by Washington. But according to the latest information circulating around Mogadishu on Tuesday morning, a second American soldier has allegedly been captured in one of the town's districts, and the SNA is now trying to locate him. Others may have been killed or are hiding. [...]
The American rapid reaction force, comprised of around 1,500 men, reinforces some 28,000 soldiers engaged under the UN flag, of which nearly 4,000 Americans are in charge of UNOSOM II's logistics. It includes a fleet of helicopters, including Blackhawks and Cobra Attacks, in addition to Orion, E-6 and Kaina spy planes keeping the city under constant surveillance. In opposition, according to the UN's military sources, the SNA is comprised of a "battle-hardened core" of 300 to 400 armed militia, who also benefit from a great deal of collusion in a city of one million inhabitants, of which several hundred were wounded or killed during Sunday's skirmishes.

D. DISTANCING FROM THE UN, NOT FROM THE SOMALIS

On 5 October 1993, in light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Mogadishu, MSF France leaders were re-examining the need to launch further operations in Somalia. A team was sent there to assess the situation.

Minutes of Meeting of Department of Operations, MSF France, 5 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Somalia: Further deterioration of US(UN)-Somali relations: several hundred injured. The hospitals are overwhelmed. Should we re-intervene if the medical staff are swamped? Contacts [needed] to find out more (ICRC, AICF, etc). Is it at all possible to work in Mogadishu today? Should we send equipment to Digfer [hospital]? What guarantee can we have that it will be used? Demand the hospital be made neutral. Meeting being held this week to discuss attitude to adopt.

Fax from Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France Programme Manager, to the programme managers and coordinators of MSF France, Belgium, Holland and Spain in Nairobi, 7 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
The armed skirmishes between the UN forces and those under General Aidid over the course of the weekend of 4 and 5 October led to several hundred civilians being injured

and many killed in Mogadishu. This is the first time since late 1991 that the hospitals in south Mogadishu have been so overwhelmed by such an influx of civilian victims.
For Mogadishu today, this is a new situation with several hundred civilians wounded that are difficult for the overwhelmed hospital to treat. MSF France had left behind equipment to enable the hospital to deal with this kind of situation. The equipment was managed by Pharmaciens sans Frontières and distributed to Digfer and Banaadir (two hospitals in south Mogadishu) to enable them to cope with the influx of wounded. Two MSF France staff (... and Jean-Hervé), including a doctor, will leave Paris on Friday 9 October for Mogadishu. They will bring with them several surgical kits to support the work carried out by Somali doctors at the hospitals in south Mogadishu. Moreover they will assess, in view of reprisal fighting affecting the civilian populations, the different options to support the surgical resources made available to the Mogadishu population. This work will be carried out in conjunction with the ICRC and the NGOs (AICF, PSF [Phramaciens Sans Frontières], SC[F], etc) still present in Mogadishu.

On 6 October 1993, Rony Brauman explained to a news programme on the French public TV channel France 2 that the French section was withdrawing from Somalia to avoid being held hostage by the military-humanitarian system. He also announced that the organisation was nevertheless going to send a team to Mogadishu to provide support for any surgical emergencies.

Interview of Rony Brauman, MSF France President of Board of Directors, in French TV **France 2** News, Paris, 6 October 1992 (in French). **V18**

Extract:
TV presenter: Rony Brauman, good morning. MSF left Somalia a few days ago, openly criticising the UN as it went. Do you think there really is "slippage", as we call it, in the UN's mandate at the moment?
Rony Brauman: I don't just think so, I see evidence of it every day. To begin with their engagement was military-cum-humanitarian; but it gradually became less and less humanitarian and more and more military. It has now become unacceptable. Troops who engaged to defend humanitarian principles, for moral reasons, are firing on civilian demonstrators, on hospitals, and are even attacking aid workers and journalists – although unintentionally of course. It is totally unacceptable and it is my belief that we needed to put our foot down, at least to make sure it wouldn't happen again.
Presenter: In short, you're leaving so as not to be associated, as you say, with a military operation.
Rony Brauman: We're leaving for two reasons. Firstly, because the life-threatening emergency is now over. Fortunately, the famine is behind us. Well, for lots of reasons in fact, some due to the military intervention, but also because the famine had already been brought under control before this intervention took place. And because the risk of our staff being taken for soldiers is growing all the time. We used to be at risk of a stray bullet; now we are in danger of becoming the direct targets of certain armed groups who take us for military personnel.
Presenter: So you're in more danger now than during the famine, yet the people were hungry then and out in the streets?
Rony Brauman: Its paradoxical, but true. We're less safe because before the risks were created by a war whose consequences didn't implicate us. We were respected as

members of a humanitarian aid organisation. Today, the armed groups take us for soldiers, for an invasion force, as Valérie Fourniou explained so well in your report. And so we have become direct targets. One of Médecins sans Frontières' vehicles was attacked three times within 80km on the road from Merka to Mogadishu. That's a clear sign of how serious the security problems have got. But given the huge number injured people – over the last few days almost 1000 wounded people have arrived at the hospitals - we are getting ready to send a team of surgeons back in - in slightly better security conditions.
Presenter: What kind of relations did you use to have with warlords like Aidid who we're hearing a lot about at the moment?
Rony Brauman: They were always very complicated because each warlord wanted to claim the political and material benefits of humanitarian aid for himself. But something that wasn't always understood is that we did have some room for negotiation. In fact we were able to apply pressure by playing on the rivalries between the clans, and we managed to secure the safety of our teams, forward aid to where it was most needed, and we at Médecins sans Frontières, along with the International Red Cross and lots of others, were able to deploy our teams throughout the country. So humanitarian aid was possible, but military action did absolutely nothing to help the aid workers do their job – and I think that's what needs to be understood.
Presenter: Rony Brauman, thank you very much.

'MSF Fears a New Wave of Violence in Mogadishu', **AFP** (France), Geneva, 7 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
French NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is set to send a team to Mogadishu, fearing a new spike in violence in the Somali capital, its President Rony Brauman announced on Thursday in Geneva. MSF France has decided to send, on Friday, "a bridgehead" of three people in order to re-establish the mission that had been terminated last week because "our predictions indicate that the war in Mogadishu is going to start up again," Dr Brauman told the AFP, criticising the military abuses of the UN forces in Somalia (UNOSOM).
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported over 700 people injured in the local hospitals following the weekend fighting, a third of whom are women and children. In a press release issued in Geneva on Thursday, the ICRC "instantly call for all forces involved in the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and in particular, to spare the civilian population". The president of MSF also criticised the brutality shown by the US military within UNOSOM, including towards civilians, and the finger-pointing at General Aidid as the sole person responsible for the troubles. However, he called for "a revival of the dialogue on Somalia, rather than a hasty retreat by the United States that risked creating a new mess".

At first glance, the decision to send a team to Mogadishu may seem contradictory. But it isn't in the spirit in which we mean it. Our goal is first to disassociate ourselves through words and withdraw from wherever we are closely intertwined with the UN intervention. We stand by this and did so in May 1993. But this doesn't prevent us from wondering if there isn't a way for us to be useful, considering the potential explosion in Mogadishu, in which case, we'll be back. We want to break away from the UN but we don't to break away from the Somalis. For me, from a political and symbolic perspective, we are really leaving in

spring; i.e. when the biggest part of the intervention has been lifted. Then, there were contextual or fundamental developments concerning social and economic regulations, the clarification of our position in relation to the symbolic. We are going because we want nothing to do with that, but it doesn't mean we don't want anything to do with the Somalis. All of that stretched over six months.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

The same day, two more bodies of US soldiers were displayed by Somalis before the press. On 7 October 1993, US President Bill Clinton announced that they were sending 1,700 additional troops to Somalia, while the State Department immediately called for its nationals to leave Somalia. On 8 October, he publicly announced that the solution to the problems in Somalia was political and not military.

'Two Bodies of American Soldiers Shown to the Press by Somalis', **AFP** (France), Mogadishu, 6 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
On Wednesday morning, the bodies of two white American soldiers were shown to the press, including one AFP journalist, at Bakara market in south Mogadishu, one of the main sites of Sunday's clashes between the UN forces and General Mohamed Farrah Aidid's supporters. [...]
The Americans reported that 12 rangers were killed in Sunday's skirmishes, which also left 76 in their ranks injured, while an unspecified "small number" of soldiers were reported "missing". The military spokesman for the UN in Mogadishu, Commander David Stockwell, specified that the bodies of 12 dead soldiers had all been recovered and their remains "formally identified" by a doctor.

'Clinton Attempts to Free the United States from the Quagmire in Somalia', **AFP** (France), Christian Chaise, Washington, 8 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Faced with a potential Vietnam-style stalemate in Somalia, Bill Clinton launched on Thursday a change of course, and announced to a concerned public that American troops would cease their deadly combat with a local warlord who has escaped them since June, and would leave the country by 31 March at the latest. Essentially, the brief televised speech given by the American president was tantamount to an admission that the military intervention carried out in Somalia by the United States since June, in conjunction with the United Nations, had failed, and that what was urgently needed was a political solution to be found between the various clans and factions in the country.
"Fundamentally, the solution to the problems in Somalia is not a military one, but a political one," admitted President Clinton, who faced an open revolt by Congress since a deadly battle on Sunday killed 13 and injured 75 in Mogadishu, all part of the UN forces' American contingent. Additionally, a pilot was held prisoner by General Mohamed Farrah Aidid's militia and five men are reported missing. The president also strived to reassure

his compatriots, who were already fearing a repeat of the Vietnam tragedy, an escalating intervention by American forces in a distant country where the United States had no vital interest at stake, leaving a trail of bodies and hostages in its wake.

In the 12 October 1993 edition of the French daily *La Croix*, in a joint interview with Hassen Fodha, Director of the UN Information Centre in Brussels, Rony Brauman highlighted that most of the patients treated by MSF in Somalia were injured by the Blue Helmets.
During the management meeting of 20 October, after the exploratory mission, the MSF France managers asked themselves if they should return to Mogadishu to treat the estimated 20 per cent of wounded civilians that could not be treated by the ICRC or Somali doctors.

'Somalia: "South Mogadishu Will Not Disarm"', ***La Croix*** (France), 12 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Paradoxically, what the UN succeeded in doing was to make General Aidid a hero to the people of Somalia. Is this your opinion too, Rony Brauman? Médecins Sans Frontières, of which you are the director, was the first NGO to go to Somalia at a time when nobody else was interested in the famine.
Rony Brauman: For the Somalis, Aidid is like Robin Hood. But let me remind you that the main concern of the Americans the day after they landed, on 9 December, was to shake Aidid's hand, who at that time wasn't a criminal warlord but a genuine political leader. Then he became a humanitarian criminal, then they discussed putting General Aidid in temporary exile in Eritrea, in the interests of peace, and today he is in the process of again becoming the man with whom we are going to undoubtedly negotiate behind the scenes. This demonstrates how incoherent and inconsistent this policy is, which has deliberately ignored the real situation in Somalia. All this raises a real question. Let me ask you, Mr Fodha [Director of the UN Information Centre in Brussels], who is the head of the United Nations, Clinton or Boutros-Ghali? [...]
There are currently over 700 injured people in Mogadishu, one-third of whom are women and children, and there are no surgeons to operate on them, treat them, so a part of our job consisted of bringing together surgical teams, to create a centre. This is the kind of madness going on around us and, of course, MSF can't just stand there with its arms crossed.
So Médecins Sans Frontières is returning to Mogadishu after leaving the country barely two days ago?
Rony Brauman: Well, yes. Again, it's our job. But, I assure you the moment the balance between immediate vital needs, personnel security, and humanitarian principles is destabilised, we will get out. But, if the immediate vital needs are huge, of course we'll come back, because that's our duty and our mission. However, there is an extraordinary paradox in the fact that if we are coming back today it's to treat the people injured by the humanitarian intervention. We operated completely in a closed cycle. The international community injured people that the international community will then go and treat. You have to admit this is extraordinary.
And this is nothing new because in Kismayo, in the south, we've been operating like this for months. But I want to emphasise that in Somaliland and in northern Mogadishu there

is MSF Spain, and MSF Belgium is in Kismayo. So there is a certain presence. The paradox is that today most of our surgery consists of treating those injured by the Blue Helmets, which is scandalous.

Hassen Fodha: But why are we constantly talking about those unfortunately injured by the Blue Helmets and not talking about the other people injured by the rebels, the Blue Helmets, the Somalis? That's where the problem lies. Why are we putting the United Nations on trial?

Rony Brauman: Because doctors and killers are not the same. If I, as a doctor, kill someone deliberately, my situation is far worse than if a professional criminal had done the same thing. There is definitely a difference of intention, of profound nature [...]

Do you believe that by sending American reinforcements, 700 troops and over 10,000 Marines off the coast of Mogadishu, peace will be restored in the capital?

Rony Brauman: A foreign army can, at a pinch, make war, the Americans proved it well in Korea and badly in Vietnam. But policing overseas is extremely difficult because it requires a different form of involvement.

The consequence is that, day after day, the UN is in the process of becoming a clan among many others. From the outset, the Interim President, Ali Mahdi, who controls north Mogadishu, and Aidid created a situation where the former used the UN presence to fight against the latter. The same thing goes for the factions who came together in Mogadishu in late September, who used the UN as a means to eliminate Aidid. Didn't they send a telegram to the secretary general of the UN to tell him to be done with the clans who held arms, in other words to be done with Aidid? The UN is like a game of ping-pong that moves around the different factions and whose goal is to legitimise itself and delegitimise the other. Ultimately, the UN can't control anything but its helicopter fire. [...]

But because of the UN's action everyone else is being taken to task, humanitarian aid, the journalists, the Somali civilians. We've lost count of the abuses, the intimidation measures, the acts of brutality [...]

It's not just a matter of principle. We, MSF, were in Hudur so very well placed to judge for ourselves the work done by the French military. We can, for example, fill a surgical block operating hernias, as they did. Only it seems operating on hernias in Africa is a bit stupid. Our nurses who created a feeding centre were obliged to deal with the follow-up operations of the French surgeons who operated on hernias for nothing [...] Yet, there is at least one point on which we agree, MSF and the military, and that's our common desire that's made very clear, to make a distinction between the military and the relief.

I don't speak with ministers very much but over the last few years I've had to mix with a fair number of soldiers, in Bosnia, in Somalia, and to speak with them, and I've noticed with a certain degree of pleasure that, for reasons which are nevertheless different, they don't like humanitarian-military operations either. They don't like this kind of integration, intermingling. The military doesn't facilitate the action of humanitarian teams in the medium term, they complicate it: they are just starting to be aware of this and are deeply uncomfortable about it. [...]

But what is it you actually want from the UN? [...]

Rony Brauman: [...] We also work with the UN. It's important to remind ourselves of this because it can easily go unnoticed when you get carried away in the discussion. We are criticising the UN because it exists, but it's vital. We've not trying to throw it overboard. This is the standard course of democracy, we hope to improve things by imparting criticism, but we certainly aren't out to destroy the UN. When the UN engages troops, their mission needs to be clearly defined, and we certainly don't entrust a humanitarian mission to soldiers. This confusion is prejudicial to the credibility of humanitarian

organisations. If we undermine humanitarian organisations, we undermine the help we can give to victims.
The conditions of engagement and the political framework also need to be defined. Somalia has shown, ultimately, that there are as many interpretations as national contingents. The Pakistanis, the Moroccans, the French, the Americans, the Italians, each had their own idea on the subject. The Security Council resolutions need to include the principles of respecting humanitarian law. After all, we can't call the troops to intervene for generally humanitarian purposes and then forget they have to bend to international conventions.
You must know that the UN refused to sign the Geneva conventions. The ICRC – the International Committee of the Red Cross – suggested they do and the UN declined the offer. So the UN tries to get others to follow humanitarian law but not itself! That beats everything! We ask that in the resolutions to which the United Nations Security Council adhere, measures to respect the Geneva conventions and humanitarian principles be included.

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee, MSF France, 20 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Brigitte [Vasset, Director of Operations] – Somalia:
[...] and JH Bradol returned – 200 deaths and 700 injured, this is the toll of UN/USA attacks at the start of the month. The hospitals are overwhelmed. You might think the toll got worse but the wounded that Jean-Hervé saw were correctly treated. The ICRC and the Somali doctors carry out 70-80 per cent of the work. Should we go back for the remaining 20 per cent? A decision needs to be taken [...].

For his part, Patrick Vial, who was ending his mission as representative of MSF France in Mogadishu, questioned MSF's potential return in Somalia. A report of the TV news programme, *Envoyé Spécial*, broadcast on 21 October on the public television channel France 2, showed footage of Patrick leaving a burning and bloodied Somali capital. He wondered whether the calls for aid to fight famine had not ultimately contributed to worsening Somalia's plight. V19

Letter from Patrick Vial, MSF France's Representative in Mogadishu, to the managers of MSF France, October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Dear Colleagues,
[...] In speaking today with several of the people concerned, I have come to understand a little bit more closely MSF's possible contradiction in these difficult times where humanitarian is only mentioned as "new school openings". I have spent my last three months defending an idea, clarifying MSF's methods and this famous appeal, and echoing [the MSF France coordinator's] work in the USA. A lot of digging for information, but it served a purpose over there. This was emphasised on the final day of departure. A rather sinister game is being played in Somalia, and in Mogadishu in particular (and we're certainly not naive and idealistic), and rather than be there and not do anything,

it's best to shout 'blah blah blah' out loud. Basically three months [...] of non-operational work, the validity and impact of which risk being seriously challenged due to 'MSF, the return.'
It's not a question of ego, I don't really give a damn about what's been said or will be said, I'm just a bit concerned regarding our logistics and the real reasons motivating this decision. It was quite difficult to leave when the tension was mounting and the cameras were arriving, unusual for MSF, refusing to act as firefighters in a deteriorating world of UN/relief world, we preferred to fight with the concept (fear of losing our soul?) rather than with blood and guts.
I hope you understand, it's maybe not worth the bother of going to chat with CIMOC [CMOC]/UNOSOM at the 08:00 security meeting... enough playing with clowns. Apparently Aidid and Oakley are going to do a deal, thank goodness. In case they don't (blood and scalpel), please, don't become a part of the humanitarian herd. And in any event, speak out and loud, about the substance. Happy mission. Take care, Pat.

'When War Replaces Hope: *Envoyé Spécial* in Somalia', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Jacqueline Beaulieu, Brussels, 21 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
"We are not American," Patrick Vial from Médecins Sans Frontières tells the Somalis, especially those in the southern district of Mogadishu where the majority of General Aidid's supporters are based, when he wants to cross the roadblocks. And he adds for the French members of the *Envoyé Special* team: "If I were [American], I wouldn't be here, it would be too dangerous. But it's not printed on the front of my shirt."
Of the three reports to be broadcast this evening by the *France 2* news magazine, the one entitled 'Somalia the Quagmire' is surely the most impressive. It plunges the spectator into a hell inhabited by bombs, the dead, and the injured among a panicked population, that has joined the man who was their torturer, Aidid (which translates as 'he who does not let himself be humiliated') because they are the victims of the manhunt the Americans relentlessly pursuit.
MSF's representative, who you will see during the report, was forced to abandon the country he has spent the last two years in to avoid endorsing the UN's current operation. He finally wonders if the urgent calls he made for people to come to the aid of a country driven to famine have not brought as many misfortunes to the country as those that ruled there before. The women and men of Mogadishu, when questioned by journalists, catalogue the endless list of grievances against those who came to 'restore hope'. Every day, the helicopters spread terror and sometimes death. According to reporters, these bombings have played a large part in elevating Aidid, nonetheless responsible for the majority of his country's suffering, to the status of saviour in the eyes of his compatriots. By cleaning out the areas loyal to Aidid, where supporters and civilians mix, they are creating, according to witnesses, a spirit of revenge. For Somalis in Mogadishu, the United Nations equals the United States, and one of them emphasises that in the region of Baidoa, entrusted to the French Blue Helmets, nothing of the sort is happening and the region is calm.

Minutes from MSF France's Board of Directors Meeting, 29 October 1993 (in French).

Extract:
Contrary to what the press is printing, we are returning to Somalia. [...] and Jean-Hervé Bradol are in southern Moga. The report by *Envoyé Special* on MSF (represented by Patrick Vial) in Somalia aroused a lot of criticism.

I found Paris was particularly inconsistent in sending a team two weeks after this inopportune declaration, to see what was going on. They obviously didn't trust me or they thought that, 'Patrick judged the situation badly' and that there were still things that needed to be done in terms of surgery, prepositioning equipment, setting up a team in case things really exploded. They had the impression that the conflict was mounting and that there would again be war surgery to do and that it would be good to treat the poor Somalis who went out to be killed by the Americans. By chance, I got to meet an exploratory team at an MSF house. They were leaving for Mogadishu. I told them, 'It's good of you to come but you could have notified me about your visit. I've been in Somalia for the past two weeks!'

Patrick Vial, MSF France, Coordinator in Somalia, July-December 1991, March-November 1992, July-September 1993, interviewed in 2000 (in French).

On 18 November 1993, on the occasion of a press conference held for the launch of a book published by MSF, *Populations in Danger*, Alain Destexhe, the General Secretary of MSF International, announced to the press that the results of the United Nations' operations in Somalia, as in Bosnia, were negative on both a humanitarian and a political level. Rony Brauman announced to Reuters that in Somalia, the United Nations pose a fatal threat to humanitarians.

'UN Operations a Complete Mess in Somalia, Says MSF', **Reuters** (UK), Brussels, 18 November 1993 (in English).

Extract:
The U.N.'s operation in Somalia is a mess and there is little hope of the world body's efforts there ever bearing fruit, the medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières said on Thursday. "It's (the U.N. operation) a dead end and I am very pessimistic about Somalia. It's such a mess and there is no possibility of it working," Alain Destexhe, secretary-general of the medical charity, said. Destexhe said there had been no improvement in Somalia since the United Nations dropped its high-profile hunt for Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed. "It has made no difference," he told Reuters after a news conference to promote a book highlighting the world's 10 most serious humanitarian crises.
He said the U.N. had confused its humanitarian and political roles in Somalia and other crisis areas such as ex-Yugoslavia. "After two years, the track record in Bosnia and Somalia is negative on both a humanitarian and a political level." It was essential, he said, that organisations remained neutral and objective in conflict situations. "The U.N. is not neutral... It cannot pretend to be neutral and objective when there is a military operation

in Somalia," Destexhe added. He charged the U.N. with breaking international law in its attacks on Somalis, which included hitting hospitals.

'UN Troops a Threat to Humanitarian Aid, Charity Says', **Reuters** (UK), Claire Rosenberg, Paris, 18 November 1993 (in English).

Extract:
A medical charity operating in most of the world's flashpoints said on Thursday that U.N. military operations such as those in Somalia and former Yugoslavia severely undermined efforts to halt human suffering. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees also said in a newspaper interview that the Somali experience would make the international community think twice before proclaiming a right of humanitarian interference in countries' affairs again. "The use of force to protect aid operations is a trap," Médecins Sans Frontières said in launching a 219-page report that accuses the U.N. and major world powers of bungling and foot-dragging.
"Using military protection for convoys of humanitarian aid poses more problems than it resolves," MSF President Rony Brauman said. In Somalia it turned into "a complete failure" and in Bosnia "a disastrous failure." "We warn the U.N... they pose a fatal threat to humanitarian aid," he said. "A recipient cannot help but wonder whether a man holding out a helping hand at a clinic is a brother to the one who will climb into a helicopter the next day and open fire on a crowd," he said in a clear reference to famine- and war-stricken Somalia.
Sadako Ogata, head of the UNHCR, told the French newspaper Le Monde: "What happened in Somalia showed the possibilities and limits of humanitarian interference. It is a lesson we must all meditate." MSF, which this year sent 2,000 doctors to 70 countries, said it welcomed international intervention but wanted the U.N. and the world at large to clarify the role of each player on the ground before it was too late. MSF said U.N. troops there soon became just another faction in the clan war, thus threatening the safety of aid workers, while in Bosnia, they were ineffectual and primarily served as an alibi for the international community's failure to stop the war.

We were too slow with regard to the famine. But in terms of public positioning, bearing in mind how all this has evolved and the even greater degree of complexity due to it being new (we came up against lots of things we weren't used to), I think we didn't come out too bad. The proof is that we can depend on a certain number of positions and announcements from the time, faced with a situation that seemed something new, that was going to have repercussions, and which is more or less still pertinent – I say 'more or less' because there are undoubtedly things which are questionable. However, in our position of withdrawing from the military situation, then faced with criticism, then blatantly being cut off from any link and criticism, and the attack we wanted to launch against the United Nations with the appeal... I don't think we were completely out of our minds.
I think we should look at our period of intervention in Somalia as an experiment, because in point of fact, it was one. How can an indisputably liberating force, in the sense that it came to help people dying of hunger, become an occupying force in the space of three months? How can military and civilian relief logistics end up prevailing over every other consideration? How can the managers, and the local political and military leaders, instrumentalise it, use it to their own advantage, while it was on the contrary, from the outset, supposed to cut them off in their stride, or even bring them down when the manhunt was launched? All of this complicated political interplay around the matter of relief and the challenges of protecting relief, all of the

unexpected events caused by such a situation due to the capacity for local initiative, both for the worse and for the better, truly serve as an experiment from which we can draw lessons. For MSF, this was its first experience with armed guards and its first experience with militarised international relief. It's a very important moment.

Dr Rony Brauman, MSF France, President of Board of Directors, 1982-1994, interviewed in 2012 (in French).

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 1960-1995

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.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1960	Unification of Italian Somalia and British Somaliland into the independent Republic of Somalia.			
1963-64	**October 1963-April 1964** 1st Ogaden war between Ethiopia and Somalia.			
1969	Siad Barre coup – dictatorship.			
1977-78	2nd Ogaden war. Ethiopia holds on to sovereignty over the Ogaden.			
1979-87			MSF France provides assistance to the refugees from Ogaden (Hiran, Gedo).	
1985	Start of SNM rebellion in the north of Somalia.		MSF France supports Ethiopian refugees around Hargeisa (Somaliland).	
1986			MSF Holland develops medical programmes in the northwest of Somalia.	
1987			**10 January 1987** MSF France international staff taken hostage in Tug Wajale. Closure of MSF France programmes in Somalia.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1988	**May 1988** SNM offensive on Hargeisa and Burao – hundreds of Somali refugees in Ethiopia.		Suspension of MSF Holland programme in northwest of Somalia.	
1989	USC rebels begin underground resistance in central and southern Somalia.		**January 1989** MSF Holland resumes activities in Boroma.	
1989 **MAY 1989**			**May 1989** Interruption of MSF Holland Boroma programme and evacuation of international staff.	
1990 **JAN. 1990** **MAR. 1990** **MAY 1990**	**May 1990** 114 clan leaders issue the Mogadishu Manifesto, which condemns the actions of the Siad Barre regime.		**January 1990** MSF Holland revives health centres in villages around Alei Badei. **March 1990** MSF France exploratory mission in refugee camps in Boroma. **April 1990** MSF Holland team evacuates Boroma after a car looting.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1990				
JULY 1990	**July 1990** Elections called for February. **July-August 1990** Attacks and roadside bombings against the structures of the Siad Barre regime and foreign nationals.			
OCT. 1990	**October 1990** Opposition parties agree to bring down the government by force.			
DEC. 1990	**December 1990** SNM controls the north. USC gains ground. Siad Barre declares a state of emergency. Mogadishu is paralysed. UN humanitarian personnel evacuate from Mogadishu.			
1991				
JAN. 1991		**2 January 1991** Gulf War starts.	**2 January 1991** Decision to make an 'MSF Europe' surgical mission in Mogadishu, including MSF Belgium and MSF France, and MSF Holland staff.	**4 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Charters a Plane to Somalia'. **5 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Plane has not Received Permission to Land at Mogadishu'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991 **JAN. 1991**				**6 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Part of the Médecins Sans Frontières Team has left Mombasa for Mogadishu'. MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Unable to Reach Mogadishu'.
			7 January 1991 MSF team arrives in Mogadishu and sets up in Digfer general hospital.	**7 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Arrived in Mogadishu'.
				8 January 1991 MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Team in Mogadishu'
			9 January 1991 MSF gets in touch with USC in Rome.	**9 January 1991** MSF issues official appeal for half a day's ceasefire. Reuters & *Libération*: "according to the MSF team" the government still controls Mogadishu.
				10 January 1991 MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières in Somalia: Injured Flock to Mogadishu Hospital'.
	12 January 1991 The Italian Embassy in Somalia evacuates the last foreign nationals who had taken refuge within its walls.		**11-12 January 1991** MSF gets in touch with USC in London.	**12 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Stays in Mogadishu'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991 **JAN. 1991**			**13 January 1991** MSF exploratory mission in USC areas – a driver is wounded.	
				14 January 1991 MSF Belgium Press Release: 'Emergency aid in Somalia – Médecins Sans Frontières Team Fired Upon as it Crosses the Frontline'. MSF Belgium Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Working on Both Sides of the Front'. MSF France Press Release: 'Update on Médecins Sans Frontières' Emergency Response in Mogadishu'.
				15 January 1991 MSF France Press Release: 'Correction: None Wounded Among the Médecins Sans Frontières Team in Mogadishu'.
			16 January 1991 Evacuation of MSF team from Mogadishu for safety reasons.	**16 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'The Médecins Sans Frontières Team Leaves Mogadishu'.
				18 January 1991 *Libération* (France): testimony from the MSF team evacuated from Mogadishu.
			23 January 1991 MSF team back to Somalia, meets the rebels and sets up in SOS hospital in USC zone.	**23 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Working Again in Mogadishu'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991				
JAN. 1991				**27 January 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Team Overwhelmed by Influx of Wounded'. **28 January 1991** Reuters, BBC, *NYT*: according to an MSF representative, President Siad Barre has fled his presidential palace.
			30 January 1991 Evacuation of MSF team from Mogadishu for safety reasons.	
FEB. 1991			**1 February 1991** New team of 4 MSF medical doctors in Medina hospital in Mogadishu.	
	2 February 1991 Interim President Ali Mahdi calls for international aid.			
				10 February 1991 MSF in Press Release: "Médecins Sans Frontières reaffirms its complete neutrality". MSF France launches the *Extreme Emergencies* magazine to donors. **20 February 1991** Reuters: 'Signs of Malnutrition in Somalia, French Doctors Say'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991				
FEB. 1991	**21 February 1991** Failure of national reconciliation process; mushrooming of rival factions.			
			24 February-3 March 1991 MSF Holland exploratory mission in the north of Somalia (border with Ethiopia).	
MAR. 1991		**March 1991** Rebellion of Kurds in Iraq, repressed by the regime.	**Early March 1991** MSF Holland starts a medico-surgical project in Hargeisa hospital that will later be extended to Burao and Sheikh hospitals. An MSF office is opened in Berbera.	**6 March 1991** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Intervenes in Somalia's North', Reuters (UK): 'Doctors Report Northern Somalian Town Devastated by Civil War'.
			Mid-March 1991 Difficulties for MSF supply due to Kenya denial of take-off clearance toward Mogadishu to private aircrafts.	**March 1991** MSF France: Letter to donors containing testimonials from an MSF surgeon and a journalist.
APRIL 1991		**April 1991** Kurds flee Iraqi troops toward Turkey and Iran. **5 April 1991** United Nations Resolution 688, calling on Iraq to end repression of its population. **6 April 1991** Operation 'Provide Comfort' (USA and Gulf War allies) to bring humanitarian relief to the Kurds.	**April 1991** MSF largest-ever aid operation to bring aid to Kurds.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991				
APRIL 1991			**20-21 April 1991 and 29 April-2 May 1991** MSF France exploratory missions in Kismayo.	
MAY 1991	**18 May 1991** SNM declares unilateral independence of Somaliland. Meeting of Somali factions in Djibouti: Ali Mahdi confirmed as Interim President. Aidid and Somaliland disagree.	**Late May 1991** Tigrayans take power in Ethiopia. Massive return of Ethiopian refugees to their country and influx of Somali and South Sudanese refugees.		**27 May 1991** Reuters (UK): 'Catastrophe Threatens Ethiopian Refugee Camps, Doctors Say'.
JUNE 1991			**June 1991** MSF Belgium and MSF Holland leave 'MSF Europe' mission in Mogadishu. MSF Holland extends programmes in north Somalia: support to mine clearing with Rimfire.	
JULY 1991	**July 1991** 6 Somali factions sign a ceasefire and agree to expel Siad Barre.		**July 1991** MSF France starts a programme of reconstructive surgery in Mogadishu.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991				
JULY 1991				**27 July 1991** *The New York Times Magazine* (USA), 'Daring to heal', by Kathleen Hunt – account of MSF team life and activities in Mogadishu.
AUG. 1991	**August 1991** Restart of fighting between Siad Barre forces and USC. Restart of UN operations in Mogadishu.			
SEPT. 1991		**8-10 September 1991** Fighting between Ali Mahdi and Aidid troops. Aidid demands Mahdi's resignation.	**September 1991** François Jean (MSF France): MSF is too close to the Habr Gedir clan. MSF team evacuates from Mogadishu because of fighting.	
	17 September 1991 Red Cross plane hit over Berbera.			
	27 September 1991 UN suspends its aid operations in Mogadishu.			
			30 September 1991 MSF Belgium informs MSF France it won't be able to take charge of a Kismayo programme due to lack of staff.	
OCT. 1991	**2 October 1991** Formation of a new Somali government rejected by Aidid. Observers predict rising tensions.			

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991				
OCT. 1991	**11 October 1991** Ali Mahdi calls on the international community to deliver urgent food aid.			
		15 October 1991 WFP announces that 4.5 million Somalis risk dying of hunger.		
			17 October 1991 Decision by the MSF France management committee: no opening in Kismayo until the team in Mogadishu is complete.	
	23 October 1991 Somali government accuses the forces loyal to Siad Barre of committing acts of genocide.			
NOV. 1991		**7 November 1991** SCF: The arrival of Somali refugees and Ethiopian returnees in Ogaden carries risk of a food crisis for the region.		
	17 November 1991 Extremely violent fighting resumes between troops of Ali Mahdi and Aidid in Mogadishu.		**November 1991** Within 15 days, 2,000 injured treated in Medina hospital. MSF and ICRC are the only relief agencies operating in Mogadishu.	
				20 November 1991 MSF France coordinator to AFP (France): about 400 injured admitted to the hospital since Sunday.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991 **NOV. 1991**				**26 November 1991** MSF France Regional Office for East Africa Press Release: 1,500 wounded hospitalised in Mogadishu. MSF calls for a ceasefire.
DEC. 1991	**December 1991** Total war in Mogadishu, looted and destroyed by Aidid's forces, bombing blocks access to harbour.		**December 1991** MSF Belgium explo in Kismayo. MSF Holland explo in the north. MSF difficulties with supply because blockage of ICRC boat by bombing in the harbour. MSF France considers doing an evaluation of the nutritional situation in Merca. Meetings between MSF France senior executives and the 2 war chiefs/clan leaders.	
	11 December 1991 1 ICRC employee and 1 Somali Red Crescent employee fatally wounded in Mogadishu during a food distribution.			
	13 December 1991 Hashi Egal (USPF) calls for an armed, international intervention.			**13 December 1991** AFP (France): 'No More Blood for Somali Wounded, Doctor Says'.
			15 December 1991 Andrew Natsios (OFDA): Announces that the USA would double its emergency aid. Criticises the incapacity of the UN to deliver assistance to the civilian population. US State Department calls on international community to stop 'absurd slaughter'.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1991 **DEC. 1991**	**20 December 1991** Humanitarian aid flights for Mogadishu resume.	**23 December 1991** ICRC calls on the UN to 'act urgently'. **27 December 1991** Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary General, announces the dispatch of a small team into Mogadishu and the plan for progressive reinforcement of aid.		
1992 **JAN. 1992**	**January 1992** Fighting in Burao (north of Somalia). **5 January 1992** UNICEF physician killed by bandits in the north. **14 January 1992** ICRC employee killed in Kismayo.	**6 January 1992** James Jonah, UN Secretary General Special Envoy in Somalia, declares pessimism that a ceasefire could be possible. **Mid-January 1992** ICRC issues alert on the nutritional situation in the camps looted outside Mogadishu – organises wet kitchens.	**5 January 1992** A shell hits Banaadir hospital, where an MSF team is working. **6 January 1992** Withdrawal of 5 MSF international staff from Somalia. **15 January 1992** MSF Holland evacuates Burao with 300 wounded.	**6 January 1992** MSF France Press Release: 'For Security Reasons Médecins Sans Frontières is Recalling Part of its Team from Mogadishu'. **15 January 1992** MSF France and MSF Holland Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Evacuates from Burao for Security Reasons'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992				
JAN. 1992	**16 January 1992** ICRC: hundreds of thousands of Somalis are suffering from the famine.			**20 January 1992** MSF France and MSF Holland Press Release: 'MSF Increases its Assistance in the North of Somalia'.
		23 January 1992 UN Security Council imposes an arms embargo.		
				29 January 1992 MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins sans Frontières Speaks Out on the Situation in Somalia'.
				30 January 1992 MSF Press conference: MSF France Deputy Director of Operations and MSF Holland President in New York: 'Médecins Sans Frontières – Humanitarian Emergency in Somalia'.
		31 January 1992 UNSG and director general of UNICEF call for emergency humanitarian aid in the Horn of Africa.		
FEB. 1992	**14 February 1992** Ceasefire under UN supervision between Aidid and Ali Mahdi forces.		**February 1992** MSF France opens a programme in the refugee camp in Liboi (Kenya).	**February 1992** MSF France message broadcast on Somali radio: hospitals should be considered neutral zones.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992				
FEB. 1992			**22 February-3 March 1992** Exploratory mission of MSF Belgium programme manager to Merca and Kismayo.	
MAR. 1992				**3 March 1992** *Libération* (France): 'Drugs and the Security of Foreigners, Mothers of the War in Somalia', by Stephen Smith.
			5 March 1992 MSF France's management committee asks Serge Manoncourt (Epicentre) to conduct a nutritional evaluation of the situation outside Mogadishu.	
				10 March 1992 MSF France sends information letter to donors about Somalia.
			Late March 1992 MSF Belgium starts medico-surgical and nutritional assistance to Kismayo.	
APRIL 1992			**1-2 April 1992** MSF France coordinator in Mogadishu carries out a preparatory mission for the nutritional assessment in the Merca region.	**April 1992** Proposal for an MSF press officer in the Horn of Africa refused by coordinators.
				21 April 1992 MSF France on TF1 news: footage on the evaluation team in Merca and coordinator interview.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992				
APR. 1992		**24 April 1992** UNSC Resolution 751: 50 UN military observers to monitor ceasefire and distribution of food aid.	**18-28 April 1992** MSF France epidemiological survey in the Merca and Qoryooley districts among a population of around 100,000 inhabitants, residents, and displaced. In displaced camps 90% of children under 5 are malnourished, 75% of them severely.	
		27 April 1992 Mohamed Sahnoun appointed UN special envoy to Somalia.		
MAY 1992	**May 1992** Siad Barre flees to Kenya after failing to take back Mogadishu. Supply resumed via Mogadishu port, UN observers deployed in Mogadishu.		**May 1992** MSF Holland international staff evacuated from Hargeisa and Burao: remote control management until November.	
	15 May 1992 Kismayo falls into the hands of USC.		**15 May 1992** MSF Belgium team in Kismayo evacuates.	
		Late May 1992 SCF launches a famine alert.		**21 May 1992** MSF France press conference: - Results of Merca/Qoryooley epidemiological survey. - Famine alert. - Appeal for massive aid distribution. **23 May 1992** MSF France president's annual report: "awareness-raising activities on the famine are equally as important as the operational activities."

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **MAY 1992**			**End May 1992** Opening of an MSF France nutritional programme in Merca.	
JUNE 1992		**June 1992** End of MSF operations in Kurdistan.	**June 1992** MSF Belgium team back to Kismayo.	**18 June 1992** Reuters: 'Medical Charity says Africans Dying due to Indifference'. MSF quote. **26 June 1992** MSF France Board of Directors debate on the relevance and capacity of the organisation to undertake large-scale food aid distributions.
			29 June 1992 MSF France explo in Baidoa – 'worse than Merca'. MSF sections' directors of operations' decision to open a position for a communication officer for the Horn of Africa, based in Nairobi.	
JULY 1992	**5 July 1992** 4 UN observers out of 47 have arrived in Mogadishu.		**6 July 1992** MSF Belgium team attacked and kidnapped for several hours in the Hagadera camp in Kenya.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **JULY 1992**		**9 July 1992** ICRC launches a new aid appeal to save Somalis from famine. **10 July 1992** UN postpones arrival of observers following Aidid's opposition.		**12 July 1992** New MSF France Somalia programme manager to AFP (France), "People in the tens if not hundreds of thousands will die in the coming weeks." His comments are reported in *Le Monde* on 16 July. **Mid-July 1992** MSF France holds information breakfast with ambassadors in Paris.
	20 July 1992 Omar Arteh Ghalib, Interim Prime Minister of Somalia, calls for the reinforcement of humanitarian aid and for UN troops in Somalia.	**15 July 1992** UN appeals to the generosity of donor states on behalf of people in the Horn of Africa. **20 July 1992** UNSC agreement to deploy 51 ceasefire observers and 500 armed soldiers. **22 July 1992** US Senator Nancy Kassebaum, back from Somalia, calls for an immediate deployment of UN troops.		**20 July 1992** MSF Belgium Press Release on Kenya camps: 'MSF Places its Medical Activities on Standby to Call for Increased Protection of Aid Workers and Refugees'. **22 July 1992** Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, recommends that the US Congress implement a large-scale food aid operation.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **JULY 1992**		**24 July 1992** UNSG Boutros-Ghali reproaches the UNSC for neglecting the 'war of the poor' in Somalia for 'the war of the rich' in ex-Yugoslavia.	**24 July 1992** Having won police protection, MSF Belgium recommences activities in the Kenyan camps.	
	26 July 1992 4 Somali factions declare that the escort of humanitarian convoys is not necessary and recommend instead a national police force.			
		27 July 1992 UNSC Resolution 767 authorises increase in strength of the UN operation in Somalia: Technical mission to be sent to Somalia to investigate the terms for putting in place a force for peacekeeping and for protecting humanitarian programmes. Urgent organisation of an airlift to deliver food aid.		**27 July 1992** Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, quoted in *The Washington Post* (USA): '"If we continue this way, probably a whole generation will be gone within the year."'
		30 July 1992 Andrew Natsios, USAID lobbies for a massive food distribution secured by UN forces.		
AUGUST 1992				**4 August 1992** MSF international Press Release: 'Population Decimated by Famine on the Somali Coast'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **AUG. 1992**		**9 August 1992** Mohamed Sahnoun, UN representative in Somalia to *Le Monde* (France): it is possible to avoid resorting to force.		**11 August 1992** MSF and other NGOs' Letter to UNSG Boutros-Ghali expressing concerns about Somalia.
		12 August 1992 Agreement between Mohamed Sahnoun, UN representative in Somalia and Somali factions on deployment of 500 Pakistani Blue Helmets. Mohamed Sahnoun calls on the international community to set up an airlift to carry international aid into Somalia.		
	15 August 1992 WFP airlift starts to Baidoa, flurry of media in Mogadishu and Baidoa.	**Mid-August 1992** WFP announces that without massive aid, 1.8 million people were threatened with starving to death.		
		17 August 1992 ICRC calls for more food aid.		**20 August 1992** MSF International Press Release: 'Discovery of a "Mortuary Zone" in Western Somalia'.
				30 August 1992 *The Sunday Times* (UK), 'The Clans and How they Affect Relief Work', by Geoff Prescott, MSF Holland Coordinator in Somaliland.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **AUG. 1992**		**Late August 1992** The EU releases 6 million ECUS (euros) for emergency humanitarian aid to Somalia.		
SEPT. 1992		**1 September 1992** SCF to AFP/Reuters: the UN's record in Somalia is a "failure".	**1 September 1992** MSF communication officer for Horn of Africa starts in his position.	
		9 September 1992 UNSC accepts UNSG's request to increase the number of Blue Helmets deployed in Somalia to over 4,000 men.		**9 September 1992** MSF France President of Board of Directors Rony Brauman and MSF Holland General Director Jacques de Milliano press conference in Nairobi: Priority to massively increase the distribution of food aid. Doubts that the presence of UN troops will improve security for humanitarian operations in Somalia.
			10 September 1992 Réginald Moreels, MSF Belgium President of Board of Directors, internal note on MSF France and MSF Holland's public opposition to the Blue Helmet deployment.	**10-13 September 1992** Patrick Poivre d'Arvor, star presenter on French television in Mogadishu (with airfare paid by MSF France).
				10 September 1992 MSF France Press Release and interviews: 'Priority Must be Given to the Continuation and Decentralisation of Food Aid.' Unreleased MSF Belgium Press Release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium Declares itself in Favour of the Blue Helmet Deployment to Somalia'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **SEPT. 1992**				**11 September 1992** Belgium ex-Prime Minister, Wilfried Martens, as MSF Belgium Envoy in Somalia, calls for the deployment of UN forces in order to protect the distribution of humanitarian aid.
	14 September 1992 Initial contingent of Blue Helmets arrives in Mogadishu.		**Mid-September 1992** MSF Holland opens an emergency medical programme in Baidoa in cooperation with MSF France, CARE International, Concern, UNICEF, ICRC. Agreement on MSF France being responsible for joint representation for the 2 sections with regards to the authorities in Mogadishu. MSF France opened programmes in Hudur and Wajid. MSF France coordinator facing some problems with the Aidid clan.	
	15 September 1992 WFP starts to drop food aid in isolated regions.			**15 September 1992** Rony Brauman, MSF France President of Board of Directors, to *La Croix* (France): it is necessary to delay sending the Blue Helmets to Somalia to avoid stirring up tension. **17 September 1992** MSF France Press Release: 'Médecins sans Frontières to the Rescue of Children in Hudur'.
			18 September 1992 5 MSF France employees and 2 journalists briefly taken hostage in Medina hospital.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **SEPT. 1992**				**23 September 1992** MSF France's fundraising appeal for its aid operations in Somalia.
		24 September 1992 On return from Somali refugee camps in Kenya, Actress Audrey Hepburn, UNICEF's Special Ambassador, states that Somalia can still be saved.		
			Late September 1992 MSF France coordinator opposes MSF Belgium's desire to open a programme in Bardhere.	
OCT. 1992			**1 October 1992** MSF Switzerland opens a programme in Kansardhere (part of MSF France programme).	
				3 October 1992 Rony Brauman, MSF France President of Board of Directors in *Le Monde* (France): at the price of 20% of the total value in potential losses, international aid can produce real results, international protection would cost between 5 and 10 times more.
				5 October 1992 MSF Switzerland Press Release: 'MSF Switzerland Intervenes in Somalia to Assist 30,000 People'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **OCT. 1992**	**8-11 October 1992** Suspension of food airlifts for 4 Somali towns.	**10 October 1992** UN asks the donor countries to support its '100-day action programme' of US$82.7 million to provide assistance to the Somalis.	**14 October 1992** Part of MSF Holland team in Baidoa is evacuated for 1 week following rumours of a possible attack on the town.	
		20 October 1992 France 'Day for Somalia' (school students asked to bring rice for Somalis).	**21 October 1992** Looting of the MSF Holland radio room in Baidoa.	
	23 October 1992 Suspension of food airlift at Bardhere. Aidid forces prevent international aid from deploying in the port and at Mogadishu airport. Aidid demands the constitution of a police unit with the help of international forces.	**27 October 1992** Mohamed Sahnoun, UN representative in Somalia, forced to resign.		

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **OCT. 1992**				**28 October 1992** MSF France Press Release: 'The Resignation of Mr Sahnoun Risks Compromising the Efforts Undertaken for Somalia'.
			Late October 1992 Medina hospital's staff on strike forbids access to MSF international staff at the hospital.	
NOV. 1992		**Early November 1992** In the USA, increasing demand for direct intervention by USA forces in the area most severely affected by the famine.	**Early November 1992** MSF France decides to close down its activities in the Medina hospital.	**Early November 1992** MSF France steps up advocacy with main stakeholders and decides to re-launch communications to highlight slow progress and mistakes of UN machine.
			7 November 1992 some of MSF Holland team in Baidoa evacuates again after 1 of them was shot at.	
			10 November 1992 MSF France headquarters decides that the coordinator of the mission, Patrick Vial, who had been receiving death threats over several months, must leave Somalia.	**10 November 1992** *Chicago Tribune* (USA): 'Fatal Sense of Resignation: Many Somalis Quietly Shun Aid, Await Death', by Liz Sly. MSF France team in Hudur attests that the death rate remains extremely high.
		12 November 1992 A food aid convoy is attacked near Baidoa, a strategic town for food distribution in the region most affected by famine.		**12 November 1992** *Le Monde* (France): 'Somalia: America Flies Over a Starving Country, by Brigitte Doppler and Frédéric Vigneau, MSF France team in Somalia.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **NOV. 1992**	**16 November 1992** Interim President Ali Mahdi threatens to bomb the port in Mogadishu. **20 November 1992** A group of NGOs refuses the protection of UN guards and relies on their own Somali guards. **24 November 1992** A shell hits a WFP ship in the port of Mogadishu. The airlift has been virtually suspended. **28 November 1992** Aidid declares his acceptance of a possible dispatch of 30,000 UN soldiers to Somalia to protect the distribution of food aid.	**27 November 1992** UN sources tells AFP of a possible deployment to Somalia of a UN-led multinational force, under USA command.	**21 November 1992** A weapon is aimed at 2 nurses from MSF Holland team in Baidoa.	**27 November 1992** *Libération* (France) : Rony Brauman, MSF France President of Board of Directors, argues against military intervention in the name of humanitarian aid (picked up by *The New York Times* USA). MSF internal position paper, Jacques de Miliano, MSF Holland President: 'MSF takes no position on the appropriateness of military intervention'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **NOV. 1992**				**30 November 1992** MSF France Draft letter to UNSG: a range of precautions should be taken to ensure the intervention stays on track (cancelled on 1 December).
		Late November 1992 MSF Holland international staff return to Hargeisa and Burao.		
DEC. 1992		**3 December 1992** Meles Zenawi, President of Ethiopia, called on the international community to 'uphold the Somali people's pride'. UNSC Resolution 794: authorises the rollout of a military operation ('Restore Hope') in Somalia under the United States' command so as to "establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations".		
	4 December 1992 Under the glare of cameras, Bernard Kouchner, French Minister of Health and Humanitarian Affairs, carries sacks of rice collected by French school students on his shoulders. Massive arrival of journalists in Mogadishu: prices skyrocket. NGO international staff evacuated to avoid looting before the international force arrived. Armed groups leave Mogadishu for Baidoa: looting and violence.			**4 December 1992** MSF France Board votes against an MSF public positioning regarding the in-depth issues underlying the US troops' intervention in Somalia. Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium's Communications Director to *Le Journal et Indépendance – Le Peuple* (Belgium): this intervention had become necessary, but it poses security risks for members of humanitarian organisations.

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1992 **DEC. 1992**			**5 December 1992** Evacuation of MSF Switzerland/MSF France team from Kansardhere, temporary closure of the mission. **5-16 December 1992** MSF Holland's international team in Baidoa reduced to 3 people.	
		6 December 1992 United States' Ambassador in Nairobi, Smith Hempstone: "If you liked Beirut, you're going to love Mogadishu."	**6 December 1992** 3 vehicles belonging to MSF and Catholic Relief Services are stolen in Kenya and driven to Somalia. Kenya announces the closure of its border with Somalia.	
				7 December 1992 MSF Holland Press Release: 'Looting in Baidoa – the Slow Pace of Preparations for the Somali Intervention Increases the Risks'.
	8 December 1992 2 US fighter planes fly over Baidoa, accentuating the tensions among the armed groups.			
	9 December 1992 US troops land in Mogadishu with much media fanfare and take control of the city. Night of looting in Kismayo.	**9 December 1992** UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, announces a 5-stage action plan "to extract Somalia from chaos".	**9-20 December 1992** After a night of looting, part of international staff from humanitarian organisations, including 7 MSF Belgium personnel based in Kismayo, evacuates to Nairobi.	**9 December 1992** The Globe and Mail (Canada): 'Baidoa Racked by Rush for Loot, "Bystander, 4, Shot in Chest"' quote from MSF team.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **DEC. 1992**				**10 December 1992** AFP (France): 'MSF's President Denounces the Grotesque Antics of Kouchner and his Bags of Rice'. Reuters: testimony from the coordinator of MSF Belgium on the situation in Kismayo.
	11 December 1992 Ali Mahdi and Aidid sign a peace agreement.			**11 December 1992** MSF Belgium letter to the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Belgian Representative at the United Nations, and the Belgian Ambassador in Nairobi asking for information on the operational aims of Operation 'Restore Hope': MSF Belgium coordinator voices concerns about the risk of image-confusion between the MSF Belgium team in Kismayo and the contingent of Belgian soldiers due to arrive. MSF Holland Press Release: 'Despite the Fighting, Médecins Sans Frontières Continues to Offer Assistance in Baidoa'.
			15 December 1992-14 January 1993 MSF France conducts a nutritional survey in Hudur.	
				16 December 1992 MSF Holland Baidoa team to the media: "The president of the United States did not keep his promises."

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **DEC. 1992**	**17 December 1992** US troops and French foreign legion participating in Operation 'Restore Hope' finally deploy to Baidoa. **18 December 1992** 200 US soldiers land in Kismayo airport, disarm 1 NGO's guards and take off again. **20 December 1992** Belgian and US contingents land in Kismayo port. Food supply restarts. **25 December 1992** French contingent arrives in Hudur.		**19 December 1992** The MSF Holland in Baidoa is complete.	**28 December 1992** *Libération* (France): 'The Day the Soldiers Leave Somalia', editorial by Dominique Martin, MSF France Programme Manager. **29 December 1992** Réginald Moreels, President of MSF Belgium Board of Directors, to *The New York Times* (USA): the warlord Jess, who had initiated the violence, said that it would only last an evening.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1992 **DEC. 1992**	**30 December 1992 - 1 January 1993** US President George Bush visits Somalia. Pictures with Ali Mahdi and Aidid. **31 December 1992** US troops in Merca. Somali armed groups depart from Mogadishu.			
1993 **JAN. 1993**	**2 January 1993** UNICEF representative in Kismayo is murdered by his own guards.		**1 January 1993** Near a Kismayo beach, the MSF Belgium team discovers the corpses of December's massacred victims.	**3 January 1993** MSF Belgium Press Release: 'The Death of a UNICEF Representative in Kismayo Could Have Been Avoided'. *Le Soir* (Belgium): Réginald Moreels, President of MSF Belgium Board of Directors, sets out criteria for when a humanitarian worker could call for a military intervention, once all diplomatic channels had been exhausted.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993 **JAN. 1993**		**4 January 1993** Military sources in Mogadishu announce that Operation 'Restore Hope' will come to an end by 20 January 1993 at the latest, to be replaced by an operation supported by the UN, 'UNOSOM II'.	**6 January 1993** MSF Belgium opens a programme in Bardhere.	**7 January 1993** *Le Soir* (Belgium) Wilfried Martens (ex-Prime Minister of Belgium), MSF Belgium Envoy in Somalia : the Somali paramilitary groups need disarming and a dialogue instigated with the Somali faction chiefs.
	14 January 1993 Kurt Lustenberger, the ICRC delegate in Bardhere, is murdered by looters.			
	15 January 1993 The Somali factions sign a ceasefire agreement and plan a reconciliation conference.			
	22-24 January 1993 Belgian paratroopers attacked by Morgan's forces in Kismayo.	**22 January 1993** The United States officially asks the UN Security Council to take command of the multinational task force in Somalia (UNITAF).		

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993				
JAN. 1993			**23 January 1993** MSF Switzerland/MSF France mission in Kansardhere is re-opened after an assessment. MSF Belgium vehicle attacked by the population in Kismayo.	
			24 January 1993 MSF Belgium team evacuates Kismayo. MSF Holland vehicle attacked and guards injured in Baidoa.	**24 January 1993** MSF Belgium press release: 'Violent demonstrations in Kismayo. Médecins Sans Frontières forced to partially evacuate its teams.'
			26 January 1993 MSF Belgium team returns to Kismayo.	
			29 January 1993 MSF Belgium team evacuates from Bardhere.	
FEB. 1993				**4 February 1993** MSF France publishes results of an epidemiological survey in Hudur. Mortality rate remains 7 times higher than normal in displaced population. MSF renews its call on public generosity to improve this situation, which remains critical.

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1993				
FEB. 1993	**6 February 1993** UN launches a wide-scale operation to distribute food to the Mogadishu population in an attempt to bring down the price of staple items. For first time, US troops are target of stones by young Somalis.			
	22 February 1993 Kismayo falls into the hands of General Morgan, hundreds dead and injured. Valerie Place, a nurse working for the Irish organisation Concern, is killed during an attack on her vehicle by Somalis near Afgoye.		**22 February 1993** Some 100 people take refuge at the MSF Belgium base, protected by Belgian paratroopers, then replaced by American soldiers.	**22 February 1993** MSF Belgium Press Release: 'Somalia: Violent Combat Overnight in Kismayo.'
				24 February 1993 MSF France coordinator for the Horn of Africa calls for a press conference to condemn the loss of human life caused by Operation 'Restore Hope'.
	22-28 February 1993 Fighting between Morgan and Jess clans in Kismayo.		**27 February 1993** The MSF Holland team in Baidoa is attacked by its own armed guards.	
MARCH 1993			**March 1993** MSF Belgium team witnesses abuse by the Belgian paratroopers.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993 **MAR. 1993**			**1 March 1993** Meeting of MSF Somalia programme managers on security: MSF Belgium – no further need of armed guards. MSF France and MSF Holland would like to reach this point, but they hadn't got there yet. **2 March 1993** MSF coordinators meeting in Nairobi and Mogadishu: - There is still an emergency humanitarian crisis in Somalia. - MSF should review its operational approach in this country, notably its dependence on armed guards or UNITAF forces. **3 March 1993** As a security preventive measure, MSF France evacuates from Kansardhere. MSF Holland in Baidoa under protection of Australian forces.	**2 March 1993** MSF Holland Press Release: 'MSF Fears Further Deterioration of the Security Situation in Baidoa'. **5 March 1993** MSF France Board debates the question of maintaining or potentially removing the teams from Somalia.

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1993 **MAR. 1993**			**8-12 March 1993** MSF France general director and programme manager visit the missions in Somalia, where a decision has been made to implement a disengagement process with transfer of programmes over 2 months.	**13 March 1993** MSF at the UN humanitarian assistance coordination meeting for Somalia: The plan proposed within the UNOSOM framework has little chance of being implemented while the security problems are not resolved.
	15-28 March 1993 Somali factions make an agreement to set up a 'national council of transition' and general disarmament.			**15 March 1993** MSF Belgium coordinator to Reuters: "It's much worse now [with the UN troops]. Kismayo has never been so violent. Our programme here has been set back by 6-8 weeks."
	Mid-March 1993 Visit to Kismayo by Belgian Minister Leo Delcroix and Belgian Secretary of State for Cooperation Erik Derycke. They question the work of NGOs.			**16 March 1993** MSF Holland Press Release: 'Protection by United Nations' Soldiers – Somalia: the Médecins Sans Frontières Team in Baidoa Complete Again'.
			17 -18 March 1993 MSF Belgium asks MSF France not to justify its withdrawal by declaring the country's emergency is 'at an end'.	**17 March 1993** MSF Belgium Press Release and Press conference: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium Shocked and Outraged by the Opinions held by Ministers Delcroix and Derycke Following their Brief Visit to Somalia'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993 **MAR. 1993**	**26 March 1993** In Mogadishu, US soldiers, feeling threatened by stones thrown at their vehicles, shoot into the crowds, wounding children. In Kismayo, while Jess' troops attempt to take over the town, the UNITAF carries out a naval air show of force in the bay.	**26 March 1993** UNSG gives its backing to a large-scale peacekeeping operation, dubbed UNOSOM II, that will gradually take over from UNITAF, with 28,000 troops and 2,800 civilian staff.	**26 March 1993** An MSF Holland security guard is shot dead by an Australian soldier.	
APRIL 1993				**April 1993** Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors in *Messages* (internal newsletter): 'Médecins Sans Frontières and the UN: Between Us, It's Ambiguous'.
			8 April 1993 MSF France decides to close the Kansardhere programme.	
		19 April 1993 UNITAF is officially replaced by UNOSOM II.		
				23 April 1993 The Dutch media announces that MSF Holland is planning to withdraw from Baidoa.
			26 April 1993 MSF Holland programme in Baidoa is terminated.	

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1993 **MAY 1993**			**4 May 1993** The final programmes run by MSF France in Somalia are officially closed. 1 coordinator stays to close the Hudur programme, to assess the other missions and relations with UNOSOM, and to identify other potential zones to explore.	**3 May 1993** MSF Holland Press Release: 'Somalia: Security Conditions No Longer Acceptable in Baidoa – Médecins Sans Frontières Suspends its Aid Programme'. **Early May 1993** Peter Casaer, former MSF Belgium Coordinator in Somalia, writes report on the conduct of the Belgian paratrooper commandos and sends it to the Belgian king, but no plans to distribute it publicly. **15 May 1993** MSF France president of Board of Directors' annual report, "epidemic of the militarisation of humanitarian aid". **26-27 May 1993** MSF France at OFDA meeting to review the military-humanitarian operations: the military intervention happened too late. The military/humanitarian confusion has negative repercussions on the security of relief workers.

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1993 **JUNE 1993**			**June 1993** Closure of MSF France mission in Hudur.	
	5 June 1993 23 Pakistani UNOSOM II soldiers are killed during a confrontation near a radio station controlled by Aidid.	**6 June 1993** UNSC Resolution 837 condemns attacks on the United Nations operation in Somalia and calls for arrests. **9 June 1993** AICF announces the suspension of all its missions in Somalia due to the climate of insecurity.		
	11 June 1993 UNOSOM II's air force launches night attacks on the neighbourhoods supporting Aidid, with the aim of destroying the radio and locations presumed to be holding weapons piles.		**11 June 1993** Surgical team from MSF France lands in Mogadishu.	**11 June 1993** MSF France and MSF Spain share a declaration drawn up by NGOs operating in Somalia for the special representative of the UN's secretary general for UNOSOM II, expressing concern about the consequences of large-scale operations led by the UN forces in Mogadishu.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993 **JUNE 1993**	**13 June 1993** At least 14 people, including women and children, are killed while a demonstration is stamped out by the UNOSOM forces.	**13 June 1993** Leading US political and military figures express their regrets for civilian deaths but state that the UN's actions can be defended, accusing General Aidid of using women and children as human shields. US House Democrats ask if the rules of engagement have not been shattered and predict that this sort of incident will happen again.	**13 June 1993** The MSF team treats some of the wounded from the UNOSOM attack.	**13 June 1993** AFP (France): 'The killing by U.N. troops in Mogadishu of at least 14 Somali demonstrators was slated Sunday as "monstrous" by the president of French medical agency Medecins Sans Frontieres.'
				14 June 1993 MSF Belgium/MSF France/MSF Holland/ MSF Spain Press Release: 'MSF statement against the killing of civilians in Mogadishu'.
				15 June 1993 MSF France Press Release: "A surgical team from Médecins Sans Frontières has been in Mogadishu since 11 June to respond to the emergency medical needs associated with the gradual deterioration of the situation in the Somali capital."
	17 June 1993 UNOSOM forces launch air and land interventions in Aidid's neighbourhood, causing the deaths of 60 Somalis, wounding 60, and destroying dozens of buildings. Digfer hospital, where some Aidid partisans are hiding out, is bombed during the course of the morning.	**Night of 16-17 June 1993** UN's special envoy in Somalia gives an order to arrest General Aidid, whom he qualifies as a "threat to the security of Somalis and the international community".		**17 June 1993** MSF France Press Release: 'UNOSOM Forces Attack Relief Base – MSF Calls for Official Enquiry'.

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1993 **JUNE 1993**		**18 June 1993** US President Bill Clinton declares that the operation in Somalia had "ended" and was a success.		
JULY 1993		**Early July 1993** Africa Rights accuses the Belgian military contingent of violent and racist acts against Somali civilians. Media and international community steps up criticism of the UN forces' strategy and urges them to resume discussions with General Aidid.	**Mid-July 1993** Peter Casaer, former MSF Belgium Coordinator, gives an updated version of the report sent to the king in May to the minister of defence.	**Early July 1993** Peter Casaer, former MSF Belgium Coordinator in Somalia, confirms to the media that his team in Kismayo has witnessed abuses, and refuses to participate in an inquiry under the Ministry of Defence.
	12 July 1993 UNOSOM forces shell 1 of General Aidid's houses where elders, clan and local leaders are meeting. A mob kills 4 foreign journalists in retaliation.			**20 July 1993** MSF France submits an appeal "for violation of humanitarian law in Somalia during UNOSOM operations on 17 July" to the United Nations Security Council, the Military High Command, and national commands of the United Nations forces in Somalia. **27 July 1993** MSF France/MSF USA Press Release: 'Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders submits an appeal to the United Nations'.

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1993 **JULY 1993**				**Late July 1993** MSF France information campaign on MSF appeal led among relevant UN actors and in the member countries, in particular among the US senators.
AUG. 1993		**5 August 1993** *The Washington Post* (USA) reports on an internal report in the legal department of the United Nations on Somalia, severely criticising the attack by the US forces on 12 July on the house sheltering Somali elders. **10 August 1993** 26 NGOs working in Somalia publicly criticise the direction taken by UNOSOM II, highlighting the ethical and legal issues raised by its actions. **22 August 1993** US leaders decide to send a unit of rangers to Somalia and announce that General Aidid needs to be "eliminated from the Somali equation".		**24 August 1993** Aktueel (VRT, Belgium Radio): Belgian paratroopers recount, and attempt to justify, the 'blunders' that they committed in Somalia.

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1993				
AUG. 1993	**30 August 1993** UNOSOM launches a new helicopter operation in the Digfer hospital area, where the home of General Aidid is located.	**30 August 1993** AICF denounces the use of its premises by the UNOSOM II forces for an operation aiming to capture local personnel tasked with providing security for the neighbouring premises used.		
SEPT. 1993		**September 1993** Regarding the accusations against the Belgian paratroopers, an inquiry commission is set up in Belgium, composed of senior officers and the national defence's director of civil administration.	**15 September 1993** MSF France introduces an appeal regarding the attack of the base in June, this one to the United National Administrative Tribunal of the UN.	**September 1993** 'Somalia – A Humanitarian Crime', essay by Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, published by Editions Arléa. **26 September 1993** MSF France representative in Somalia to AFP (France): MSF France is going to have nothing more to do with Somalia and will pack its bags. **27 September 1993** AFP (France): 'Relief Group Blasts UN, Pulls Out of Mogadishu.' 'Belgian Aid Group to Stay in Somalia'. **28 September 1993** Reuters: 'MSF France leaves Somalia'.
OCT. 1993	**3 October 1993** UN forces reinforced by US commandos launch a vast operation in Mogadishu against the troops led by General Aidid; at least 500 Somalis and 19 US soldiers killed, 1 pilot is captured.			**3 October 1993** AFP (France): 'Aid Boss Slams US, UN'.

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993 **OCT. 1993**	**4 October 1993** Aidid publicly demands 'a stop to the massacre of Somalis'.		**5 October 1993** MSF France leaders re-examine the need to launch a further intervention in Somalia.	
	6 October 1993 Bodies of US soldiers are paraded and a captured pilot is humiliated in Mogadishu.			**6 October 1993** Rony Brauman, MSF France President of Board of Directors, to Antenne 2 (France): MSF France is withdrawing from Somalia to avoid being held hostage by the military-humanitarian system. MSF France is going to send a team to Mogadishu to provide support for any surgical emergencies.
		7 October 1993 US President Bill Clinton announces they are sending 1,700 additional troops to Somalia. US State Department immediately calls for its nationals to leave Somalia.	**7-20 October 1993** MSF France exploratory mission in south Mogadishu.	**7 October 1993** AFP (France): 'MSF Fears a New Wave of Violence in Mogadishu'.
		8 October 1993 US President Bill Clinton announces that the solution to the problems in Somalia are political and not military.		

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993 **OCT. 1993**				**12 October 1993** Rony Brauman, President of MSF France Board of Directors, to *La Croix* (France): "Most of the patients treated by MSF in Somalia have been injured by the Blue Helmets."
			20 October 1993 MSF France managers ask themselves if they should return to Mogadishu to treat the 20 per cent of wounded civilians not being treated by the ICRC or Somali doctors.	
				21 October 1993 'Envoyé Spécial' programme on Antenne 2 (France): Patrick Vial, representative of MSF France in Somalia, wondered whether the calls for aid to fight famine didn't ultimately have a part in aggravating Somali misfortune.
			29 October 1993 MSF France exploratory mission in Mogadishu.	

	Somali crisis	International	MSF operations	MSF public statements and advocacy
1993 **NOV. 1993**				**18 November 1993** MSF France Press Conference on *Populations in Danger* (MSF France publication). Reuters (UK): Rony Brauman, MSF France President of Board of Directors, "In Somalia, the United Nations pose a fatal threat to humanitarians." – Alain Destexhe, MSF International General Secretary: "The results of the UN operations in Somalia, as in Bosnia, are negative on both a humanitarian and a political level."
DEC. 1993		**December 1993** Belgian inquiry commission issues a report which recognises that unacceptable abuses were committed by the Belgian paratroopers in Kismayo, but considers them isolated cases.		
1994 **MAR. 1994**		**March 1994** Withdrawal of the last US soldiers from Somalia.		
1995	UNOSOM troops leave Somalia.			

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