

Taiz incident report: Airstrike on Taiz health clinic, Houban district, Taiz city, YEMEN

2 December 2015

Background

In Taiz city, an MSF mother and child hospital was opened in November 2015. The area surrounding the hospital was populated by a high number of internally displaced people living in poor conditions. To better address their health needs and in order not to overwhelm the outpatient department of the hospital, a separate basic healthcare clinic was established in the vicinity of the hospital on 1 December 2015. The tented clinic was set up in an empty field in a residential neighbourhood where many internally displaced people had gathered. MSF considered this location to be a safe and appropriate place for the clinic as there were no obvious potential military targets nearby. Moreover, there had been no airstrikes, nor any fighting in the area, in the months before the clinic was established.

As is routine for MSF in settings of armed conflict, the GPS coordinates of the MSF medical facilities had been shared with all parties to the conflict. The coordinates of the clinic were shared with the Saudi-led coalition (SLC) on 29 November and once again on the morning of 2 December following airstrikes approximately two kilometres from the clinic. The 6x5-metre tent was white and the roof was marked with a 2x3-metre flag with the MSF logo. The MSF team had several meetings with the relevant community leaders in the area and notified the authorities regarding the clinic prior to its start-up.

MSF saw approximately 150 patients on the first day of the clinic. On the day of the airstrike, the clinic closed early because airstrikes in the surrounding area had deterred patients from coming to the clinic.

MSF operations in Taiz today

The situation in Taiz remains extremely serious, with some of the heaviest fighting in the country. MSF is running lifesaving medical activities on both sides of the frontlines in Taiz, where most hospitals have closed due to the conflict. In the Al Houban neighbourhood, MSF runs a mother and child hospital where, in August 2016, 458 deliveries were recorded and over 400 severely malnourished children were admitted to the therapeutic feeding centre. MSF also runs a trauma centre for war-wounded and trauma cases and facilitates referrals. In the enclaved city centre, MSF supports maternity services at Al Jomhuri hospital, paediatric services at Yemeni Swedish hospital, and emergency room services at both Al Thawra and Al Rawdah hospitals. MSF also provides emergency room and emergency operating theatre supplies to Khalifa Hospital in Al-Turba.

In Taiz alone, MSF has treated over 10,000 war-wounded cases since July 2015, including 934 in August 2016 alone. Most of the wounded are coming from the city centre, where many civilians are caught in the middle of intense fighting, struggling for food and survival. The patients MSF sees in Taiz mainly suffer from injuries due to airstrikes, bomb blasts, shelling, gunshots, snipers and, more recently, landmines. Movement in and out of the city remains restricted and dangerous for civilians and humanitarian actors.

MSF security report as filed by the MSF team in Taiz (unedited)

MSF SECURITY INCIDENT REPORT

Country:	YEMEN	Incident Type:	Airstrike near clinic
Project:	TAIZ	Date:	Thursday 02 rd December 2015

INCIDENT DETAILS

DATE AND TIME:

Wednesday, 02nd December at 14:10PM

LOCATION:

MSF Clinic site at Wadi Al-Qubah Area, in Al-Kasabah of Al-Hoban; located at GPS Coordinates: **13°36'50.02"N** and **44°05'47.05"E**.

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

- On Wednesday, 02nd December at 14:10PM an airstrike hit the direct vicinity of a MSF clinic. The airstrike injured 9 people including a MSF health educator and the MSF guard. One of the wounded persons died of his injuries the following day.
- The clinic was set up in a white tent, 5 m x 6 m, marked with a flag with the MSF logo. The airstrike hit the ground at 22 metres distance from the clinic.
- At the moment of the airstrike, the clinic was closed. Normal clinic times are from 09:00 to 14:00. But on this day, the health staff and the patients left the location at around 13:40. The team left early as there were only a small amount of patients due to other airstrikes in other parts of the neighbourhood earlier in the morning.
- Of the people who were injured, 3 were next to the tent and the rest were at a short distance. Those present next to the clinic-tent included the person who died the following day and the MSF guard, who was seriously injured. Two of nine injured were transferred to Al Qaidah hospital; seven to Al Rasalah hospital.
- The explosion was very heavy and felt by all the staff in the nearby MSF Mother and Child hospital. Staff started panicking and were scared, some started crying and wanted to go home. After phone discussion with the Hospital-Manager, it was decided to stop non-essential activities in the hospital and let the staff go home.
- Following the airstrike a big part of the displaced population fled the area. In addition, the host community started to demand the displaced people leave the area, saying that it was because of them that MSF setup a clinic and that this led to the airstrike happening in the area. Most people are now displaced to Jabal Raimy and Al-Qahaaf.

□ EARLIER EVENTS LEADING TO THE INCIDENT:

- When MSF opened the Mother and Child Hospital in Al-Houban on 7 November 2015, many patients were coming to the hospital from its immediate surroundings, where many displaced people are living under difficult circumstances. Therefore a temporary clinic was opened to reduce the pressure on the hospital. The first clinic day was Tuesday 01 December and it was supposed to be held for seven (7) days.
- The clinic is in an open space in a residential neighbourhood with many displaced. The clinic was located 500meter from the MSF Mother and Child Hospital. There are no obvious military targets around.
- There had been other cases of airstrikes throughout the period from April to date in al-Hoban neighbourhood but not in this particular site where the clinic was set up. It is the first time in 9 months that there is an airstrike in this part of the neighbourhood.
- On 29th November 2015, the Saudi-led Coalition was informed of the clinic site **13°36'50.02"N** and **44°05'47.05"E** and the Mother and Child Hospital GPS coordinates **13°36'32.46"N** and **44°5'49.19"E** (see notification in Annex).
- Following airstrikes within 2km proximity to the clinic and the MCH in the morning of the 2nd of December 2015 the Saudi-Led coalition was informed again of the position and presence of the Mother and Child hospital as well as the location of the clinic.
- Due to low patient numbers due to insecurity (airstrikes) the clinic closed earlier and the clinic team left at around 13:40. Only the health educator and the guard remained behind.

Airstrikes:

- The first airstrikes on 02nd December started from 11:20 to 12:00 PM. There were 4 strikes 1-4 km from the clinic/MCH hospital area.
- The KSA coalition was called to alert them that airstrikes are very near and to provide again the GPS coordinates of our medical facilities.

Communication between MSF and KSA:

Date	Local Time	Type Tel/Fax/email /Meeting	From	To	Content	Remarks
29.11.2015		Email	MSF Liaison Officer Djibouti	KSA Evacuation cell	Notification sent to KSA with GPS coordinates of movements and locations of MCH and clinic in Taiz.	
02.12.	12:14	Land Line	MSF Liaison Officer Djibouti	KSA Evacuation cell	MSF: We have an airstrike close to our Hospital in Taiz. Please stop the targeting there. KSA: which hospital and at which District? MSF: People are in Panic , I don't have this info yet , but can you check regarding current operations in Taiz, as we have around 3 hospital and 2 health centers KSA: ok we will check.	
02.12.	12:25	Land Line	MSF Liaison Officer Djibouti	KSA Evacuation cell	MSF: Regarding the airstrike in Taiz, it close to our MSF MCH and the Mobile Clinic which we have informed you about in in Req . No. KSA 281, I need to know if the airstrike will continue or not? KSA: I can't give such information as it is not in my authority, but we will call you back my friend is search on this issue with the dedicated authority.	
02.12.	12:46	Email	MSF Liaison Officer Djibouti	KSA Evacuation cell	MSF: Informing team about the airforce operation close to the Hospital and remind team that we informed them about the mobile clinic on time by Request No KSA 281	the email CC included the usual contact

02.12.	12:49	Fax	MSF Liaison Officer Djibouti	KSA Evacuation cell	MSF: Informing team about the air force operation close to the Hospital and remind team that we informed them about the mobile clinic on time by Request No KSA 281	Confirmation reception of the Fax available
02.12.	12:52	Land Line	MSF Liaison Officer Djibouti	KSA Evacuation cell	MSF: I am calling again regarding our situation in Taiz, does the Airstrike operation stop as it so close? KSA: Sorry you talk about what? MSF: I just call a few minutes ago regarding The airstrike close to MSF MCH and our mobile clinic in Taiz, which we have informed you about it by req . No. KSA 281, and I have sent you copy of that request by email and fax before i call you. KSA: ok let check and call after a few minutes.	
02.12.	13:05	Land Line	MSF Liaison Officer Djibouti	chief of KSA Evacuation cell shift	MSF: Hi sir with you the Liaison Officer of MSF I am calling regarding an airstrike occur close around 1 and 1.5 Km to our MCH Hospital and ongoing Mobile Clinic in Taiz. KSA : are sure it is 1 km? because it is impossible we are sure if there is any operation it is least 20 km, but it could be the sound of the exploration. MSF: We have got information from our team directly from the field and we are sure about it. KSA : okay i will check about it.	
02.12.	13:10	Land Line	KSA Evacuation cell	Liaison Officer –Djibouti	KSA : please confirm with me that this are your GPS Coordinates : MCH hospital 13°36'32.46" N 44° 05' 49.19" E , the mobile clinic 13°36'50.02" N 44° 05' 47.05"E . MSF: Yes those are our GPS Coordinates , but the air strike is so close. KSA : Don't worry us are not going to approach these Locations. MSF: are those airstrikes going to continue in the area? KSA : i am sorry I cannot give this info, but be sure that we will not approach those locations and your team has to stay there for the time being .	
02.12.	14:10				Airstrike at mobile clinic area	

FURTHER ACTIONS TAKEN:

- Event was immediately in the (social) media. A press release was sent out to state the facts as we knew them at that moment and to express our concern that civilian areas and more specific medical facilities seem to be targeted or at least not actively avoided.
- To reach out to the Saudi Led coalition to find out why they still targeted the area of the clinic.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: photos

Annex 2: location of mobile clinic and MCH hospital /airstrike

Annex 3: notifications as send to KSA on 29 November and 2 December.

ANNEX 1: PHOTOS



Photo 1: Small boy injured in the blast with shrapnel in the neck



Photo 2 : MSF Guard severely injured



Photo 3: Young man died a day after the airstrike



Photo 4: Woman injured by shrapnel



Three photos: Area surrounding the clinic and the damage caused by the airstrike, according to the local residents.

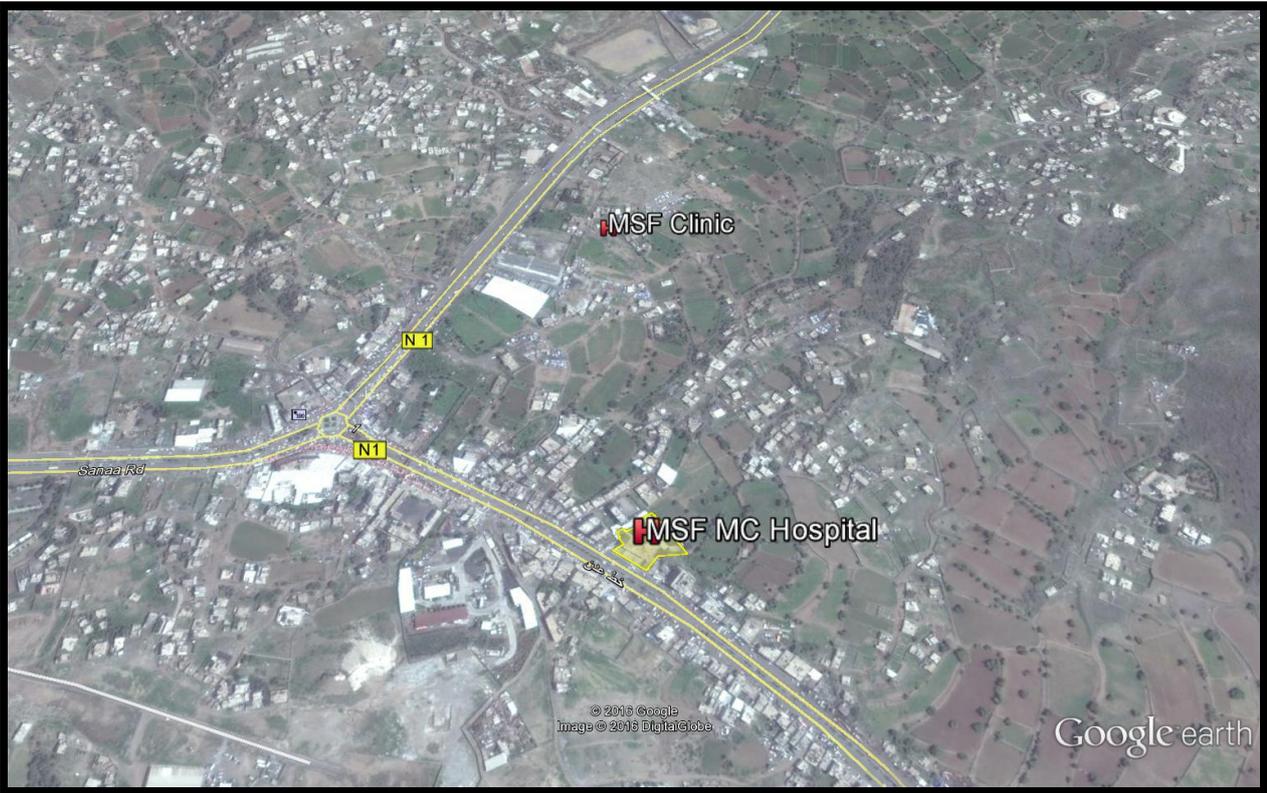


Shrapnel of the airstrike, according to local residents.

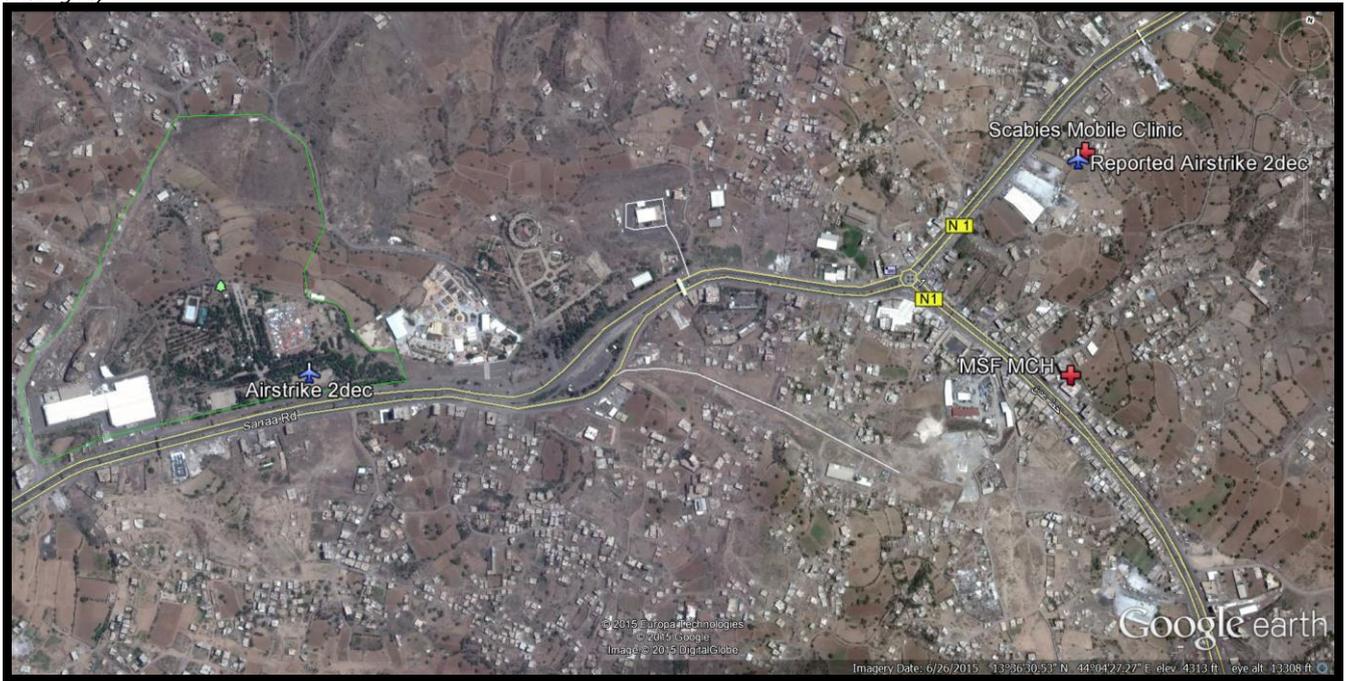
CLINIC BEFORE AIRSTRIKES:



ANNEX 2: LOCATION OF CLINIC AND MCH HOSPITAL



Showing location of two airstrikes - one from mid-morning at the left side and the one at 14:20 near the clinic on the right):



ANNEX 3: NOTIFICATIONS AS SENT TO KSA COALITION

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 29 November, 2015 21:42
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: MSF-OCA Field movement for week 49 from 01/12/2015 to 07/12/2015 KSA-281

Good Night KSA ,

Please find attached the Field Movement for MSF-OCA regarding request No . KSA-281.
Attached :

1. KSA-281 MSF-OCA Field Movement Plan : Arabic Request.
2. Field Movement MSF OCA TAIZ: GPS Coordinates & the Field Movements
3. Road Maps : Road Maps
4. Cars Photos : Photos of the Vehicles in use.

Thanks for your Collaboration,

Email Attachment 1:



رقم الطلب KSA/281

أخطار حول سير قافلة المنظمة في اليمن

فكس عاجل

من: [REDACTED]
الي: خلية الاجراء و ادارة العمليات الانسانية
رقم الفكس: [REDACTED]
الموضوع: أخطار بحركة قافلة منظمة أطباء بلا حدود في اليمن من يوم الثلاثاء 2015/12/01 الى يوم الاثنين 2015/12/07
عدد الصفحات (متضمنة هذه الصفحة): 04

حضرة السادة،
تحية طيبة و بعد،

نود أخطاركم ان طاقم اطباء بلا حدود في شمال اليمن سيقوم بجولات طبية على المشافي التابعة للمنظمة و العراکز الصحية المشمولة بنشاطاتنا، و الهدف منها تزويد مشافينا بالمعدات اللازمة و الأتوية لاستمرار عملها، وذلك من يوم الثلاثاء 2015/12/01 الى يوم الاثنين 2015/12/07 حيث يتوجه وفق خط السير و الساعات المحددة في الجدول المرفق بهذا الطلب. حيث تجدون ملحقا بالطلب:

- خريطة مسار القافلة الطبية
- نقاط الGPS المتعلقة بمراكز يعمل افراد المنظمة
- صور السيارات المستعملة

سكون لكم من الشاكرين اذا كان بالإمكان مشاركة هذه المعلومات مع السلطات المعنية.

و يمكنكم مراسلتنا على رقم الفكس التالي: [REDACTED]

للمزيد من المعلومات، يمكنكم التواصل معنا وفي اي وقت على الرقم التالي: [REDACTED]

و نشكركم مقدما على تفهمكم لنا.

فاتق الاحترام و التقدير،

مسؤول التواصل و الارتباط في جيبوتي

MOVEMENT and LOCATION SITE

MSF OCA	Area	Usual Locations	GPS location	Road Map	WEEK 49/50		
	Taiz	MSF Office / Expat House Taiz MSF MCH hospital MSF mobile clinic location	13°35'16.7" N 44° 03' 02.1" E 13°36'32.46" N 44° 05' 49.19" E 13°36'50.02" N 44° 05' 47.05" E	Yes			
Date 12/1/2015	Movement	ROUTE			Car Type	Duration Trip	People
	1	ETD MSF Office 08:00 - ETA MSF MCH 08:15			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF MCH 08:20 - ETA Mobile Clinic Site 08:25			Toyota hiace Minibus	5 mins	4+driver
Date 12/2/2015	1	ETD Mobile Clinic Site 16:45 - ETA MSF Office/House 17:00			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF Office 08:00 - ETA MSF MCH 08:15			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF MCH 08:20 - ETA Mobile Clinic Site 08:25			Toyota hiace Minibus	5 mins	4+driver
Date 12/3/2015	1	ETD Mobile Clinic Site 16:45 - ETA MSF Office/House 17:00			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF Office 08:00 - ETA MSF MCH 08:15			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF MCH 08:20 - ETA Mobile Clinic Site 08:25			Toyota hiace Minibus	5 mins	4+driver
Date 12/4/2015	1	ETD Mobile Clinic Site 16:45 - ETA MSF Office/House 17:00			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF Office 08:00 - ETA MSF MCH 08:15			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF MCH 08:20 - ETA Mobile Clinic Site 08:25			Toyota hiace Minibus	5 mins	4+driver
Date 12/5/2015	1	ETD Mobile Clinic Site 16:45 - ETA MSF Office/House 17:00			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF Office 08:00 - ETA MSF MCH 08:15			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF MCH 08:20 - ETA Mobile Clinic Site 08:25			Toyota hiace Minibus	5 mins	4+driver
Date 12/6/2015	1	ETD Mobile Clinic Site 16:45 - ETA MSF Office/House 17:00			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF Office 08:00 - ETA MSF MCH 08:15			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF MCH 08:20 - ETA Mobile Clinic Site 08:25			Toyota hiace Minibus	5 mins	4+driver
Date 12/7/2015	1	ETD Mobile Clinic Site 16:45 - ETA MSF Office/House 17:00			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF Office 08:00 - ETA MSF MCH 08:15			Toyota hiace Minibus	15 mins	4+driver
	1	ETD MSF MCH 08:20 - ETA Mobile Clinic Site 08:25			Toyota hiace Minibus	5 mins	4+driver

Email attachment 3:



Email attachment 4: Vehicle from above



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 02 December, 2015 10:46
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Airstrike Close to Our Hospital

Hi KSA ,

We have airstrike Close to Our Operation Area , which we have informed You About it on 29.11.2015 with Request No. KSA 281 .There was three airstrike Close to our MSF MCH (Mother and Child Hopspital) and Scabies Mobile Clinic.

MSF Mother and Child Hospital Coordinates in Taiz :
Latitude North : 13°36'32.46" N
Longitude East : 44° 5'49.19" E

Attached Cope of the Request which have been Applied on 29.11.2015 .

Thanks ,



MSF France Yemen Emergency – Djibouti

Cell Phone : [REDACTED]

Fax: + [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Same attachments as above.

