Press release
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MSF independent of NATO funds on the Balkans
Do not want support from the warring parties

Oslo, April 26th – MSF has decided to work without support from the NATO countries as long as the war goes on in the Balkans. The reason is that the organisation does not wish to be financially dependent of one of the warring parties. The decision means that proposals will be withdrawn and that funds already received will be returned.

– For MSF impartiality is the basis of humanitarian action, says president of MSF Norway, doctor Morten Rostrup. – As the situation is right now in the Balkans, we consider it of utmost importance to operate totally independent of NATO. This does not mean that we take stand for or against the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, simply that we do not wish to spend fund we have received from one of the warring parties, he explains.

As a humanitarian organisation, MSF has a mandate to assist all sides of the conflict, regardless of political affiliation, religion or ethnicity. Practically this means assisting on the basis of need alone, regardless of political, military and strategic considerations.

In addition to the work that is taking place in Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, MSF is trying to get back into Kosovo and Serbia to help people there. – Because of this, it is especially important to be able to say that we are operating independent of NATO, says Rostrup.

The work with the refugees will not be harmed by the decision to not spend NATO funds.
– MSF will continue the work in Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia with private funds from all over the world, explains Rostrup. – This again shows the importance of private donations for humanitarian work, he says.

MSF is today working in more than 80 countries across the world...(explaining a bit about MSF...)

For more info, you can cal press officer Hanne Bauer, tel. 22 33 45 55 or 90 82 83 61. People who want to support MSF can use account number 3 (three). To read more about MSF, please visit our web site on HYPERLINK http://www.msf.org HYPERLINK http://www.msf.org.