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cc : Jean-Marie KINDERMANS, James ORBINSKI

Objet : greek saga - souvlaki and mussaka

Dear all -

I think I am off Greek food for a while after today and all the Greek
msf is anti serb propaganda

fyi - given what was said in Greek press today - here is the final
version which went out to couple of >Greek journalists - not the press
advisory you received this morning

same rules apply - only in response to queries

sb

PRESS ADVISORY

Greek section expelled from MSF movement on
Secretary General confirms that there are only 18 sections within MSF

Athens/Brussels 21 October 1999- To reclarify the status of the former
Greek section of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the international MSF
office today publicly issued a statement reconfirming the expulsion of
the former Greek section. The decision to expel the former Greek
section was finalised September 24th by the International Council (IC)
of MSF, which is made up of all the presidents of all the sections of
the movement.

"At MSF we greatly appreciate the support we have received from the
Greek public and Greek volunteers in the past. We are sorry that there
is no longer a Greek section within the MSF movement today and hope
that in the future we will be able to reestablish MSF in Greece" said
Dr. Jean-Marie Kindermans the Secretary General of MSF.

MSF is an international humanitarian organisation with a double
mandate to bring independent assistance and to speak out about crimes
against humanity and other injustices witnessed in the field. In
conflict MSF tries to work on all sides of the conflict in an
impartial and independent way. These rules apply in Kosovo as they do
in Sudan.

In the Kosovo crisis MSF refused to accept any funds from NATO
governments. While MSF was working in Montenegro, Albania and
Macedonia, MSF was also trying to gain access to Serbia and Kosovo to
freely assess the needs of the population, independently of all
authorities and governments.

"The situation with the former Greek section became unworkable at this
time as they took the unilateral decision to enter Kosovo and Serbia
without previous discussions or agreement with the MSF movement, thus
compromising MSF operations and negotiations in the region" said Dr
Jean-Marie Kindermans.
The former Greek section distributed tons of material in Kosovo without any means of proper monitoring and control (to ensure the goods were distributed to the most in need and in an impartial way). Given the complexity of the situation, MSF had previously decided to first assess whether it was in fact possible to act impartially and independently, before any supplies were to be brought into Kosovo. The Greek sections' actions directly contradicted this decision.

In addition, to compromising independent MSF assessments and missions in the field, on a public temoinage/speaking out level, the former Greek section did not fully reflect the internationally agreed MSF positions on the lack of humanitarian space or on the crimes against humanity in Kosovo.

Although the IC then gave the former Greek section the option of remaining within the movement as long as they accepted the responsibilities and privileges that go along with membership as a partner section (there are 13 partner and 5 operational sections within the movement), the former Greek section refused.

The former Greek section was informed of the IC decision to expel them from the movement at the beginning of July. MSF counterparts in the field have also been informed that the former MSF Greece section is no longer part of the MSF movement.

"This has been a difficult decision for MSF, but the vote confirms the resolve of the movement to stand firm on issues of principle and humanitarian practice within MSF," said Dr James Orbinski President of the International Council.

For further information please call the MSF international office in Brussels - Samantha Bolton or Dr Jean Marie Kindermans + 322 280 1881