MSF in Somalia - 2009 at a glance

1,316
Number of MSF staff based in Somalia

103
Management and support staff in Nairobi

2,987
Surgical operations performed

224,179
children vaccinated

653,573
outpatient consultations

2,657
patients treated for malaria

1,376
patients treated for tuberculosis
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WHAT IS MSF?

In 1999 MSF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its work. In 2004 MSF was awarded the King Hussein Humanitarian Leadership Prize.

MSF in brief
MSF stands for Médecins Sans Frontières. This is a name that means Doctors Without Borders. MSF is the largest medical humanitarian organisation in the world, with projects in more than 65 countries. MSF’s goal is to provide emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, exclusion from healthcare and natural or man-made disasters. MSF offers assistance to people based only on need, irrespective of race, religion, gender, political or clan affiliation. MSF is a medical organisation; for us a patient is a patient no matter how they are regarded by other people.

MSF also speaks out to bring attention to people’s humanitarian needs and unacceptable suffering. For example: when people’s access to lifesaving medical care is hindered; when medical facilities – crucial to the provision of care – come under threat; when crises are neglected; when the provision of much needed aid is inadequate or abused; and to advocate for improved medical treatments and protocols.

MSF’s History and Principles
MSF is a not-for-profit medical organisation which was founded in 1971. Today MSF is a worldwide movement, with 19 national offices and an international office. The large majority of our committed staff come from the countries in which we run projects, supported by a smaller number of equally important international staff. In 2008, 23,944 national staff worked together with 2,029 international staff to provide medical care in more than 65 countries around the world.

MSF is an independent organisation. This means that MSF is not political and is not allied to any governments, political, religious, clan or economic groups. We decide on where to work and what medical care to provide based on our own expert assessment of the needs, as well as a consideration of the risks in any given context. MSF is also financially independent. Since the organisation started in 1971, MSF has worked to ensure that the majority of its funds come from charitable donations by the general public around the world. In Somalia, MSF refuses to take any money from governments or public institutions so that we can remain completely independent. In 2009 MSF spent €16,256,274 providing medical care in Somalia. All of this money was donated to MSF by private individuals.

MSF is a medical organisation and, as such, our actions are guided by medical ethics. This means that we do not take sides and we do not want to interfere with local affairs, be they social, political, religious or clan based. We treat patients based on medical need alone, wherever they come from and whoever they are. At the same time, we always respect people’s cultural and religious beliefs.
MSF in Somalia
In 2009, the Somali population continued to fall victim to indiscriminate violence, while severe drought plagued parts of the country. Millions of people urgently required health care, yet the enormous gap between the needs of Somalis and the humanitarian response on the ground continued to widen. MSF staff in eight regions of the country worked round the clock to provide desperately needed medical care as well as assisting Somalis in Kenya, Yemen, Ethiopia, Malta and Greece.

Life-saving surgical care
In projects in Galcayo, Mudug region, and Marere, Lower Juba region, the organisation was able to restart emergency surgical activities by recruiting three doctors who graduated from medical school in Mogadishu at the end of 2008. In the last five months of 2009, these three doctors performed 13 caesarean sections and 104 major surgeries, 55 of which were for injuries caused by violence.

In total MSF’s surgical teams in Somalia performed 2,987 major and minor surgeries in 2009. In Daynile Hospital, just outside the capital of Mogadishu, MSF staff treated scores of civilians injured in a dramatic upsurge in fighting in February, receiving 121 admissions in just one day. 1,137 people were admitted for blast injuries; of which 537 were women and children under the age of 14. MSF’s hospital in the central town of Belet Weyne received a total of 178 war wounded patients needing surgical interventions in 2009. In Guri El, in the neighbouring region of Galgaduud, more than 230 war wounded patients were treated over the course of the year following renewed fighting in the region.

Responding to emergency needs
In early 2009, renewed fighting in Guri El and Dhusa Mareb, central Somalia, prompted thousands of civilians to flee their homes. MSF supplied water and medical care to displaced persons in the area. Throughout the year, teams also responded to outbreaks of cholera, treating 869 people in Jilib and Marere in the Lower Juba region and 80 patients in Jowhar and Mahaday, Middle Shabelle region. Due to an increase in the number of measles cases reported, MSF launched mass vaccination campaigns in four regions of Somalia in 2009. Approximately 73,000 children between six months and 15 years old were vaccinated in Belet Weyne, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle and Bay regions and around 1,500 people suffering from measles were treated.

Actually, I did not choose this career at the beginning. I was thinking of fleeing the country as the violence was becoming intolerable. However, my brother encouraged me to go to university and study. I took his advice and studied hard at Benadir University in Mogadishu. In 2008, I graduated, among the first group of doctors to graduate in Somalia since the fall of Siad Barre. After graduation I went to Medina hospital to gain specialist training in surgery, facilitated by MSF.

I enjoy doing this job. The part I enjoy the most is seeing my patients coming back to the hospital after treatment and thanking me and encouraging me. This gives me a feeling of accomplishment and fulfilment.

Dr Abdullahi Maslah – Surgeon, Galcayo
Drought, combined with chronic poverty, bad harvests, high food prices, and ongoing violence meant that the number of children under treatment for severe malnutrition reached an all time high in MSF’s nutritional programme in Galcayo. 2,281 children were treated in South Galcayo Hospital and North Galcayo Feeding Centre between October and December 2009 alone. Elsewhere, MSF teams working in the Mogadishu suburbs of Hawa Abdi treated more than 14,000 children for malnutrition over the course of the year.

**Ongoing insecurity and violence**
Abductions and killings of international and Somali aid workers, along with ongoing insecurity, remained the biggest obstacles to MSF’s efforts to respond to the vast and vital medical needs throughout the country. In April two staff members were abducted in Huddur, Bakool region and held for ten days before being released. Following the abduction MSF felt that it could no longer safely provide quality medical care to the people living in Bakool region and had to close its largest health centre in south and central Somalia, along with four other health posts in Labaatan Jerow, El-Garas, El-Barde and Radbure.

In Somalia, MSF refuses to take any money from governments or public institutions so that we can remain completely independent.

In June an MSF employee died in an explosion in Belet Weyne, Hiraan region, which killed 30 other people. In July, for the first time in 17 years, MSF suspended activities in northern Mogadishu as heavy fighting meant that it was no longer safe for MSF staff to continue providing care in these locations. At the time of the suspension, a paediatric hospital and three other health clinics were operating. The following month, armed men raided the MSF nutritional treatment centre in Jilib, taking crucial medical supplies meant for the Somali people and forcing MSF to leave hundreds of severely malnourished children without access to crucial medical care. By the end of 2009 MSF had not been able to restart activities in Jilib. In December, two mortars hit Belet Weyne Hospital, injuring two of MSF’s staff.

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**Activities by project location**
Until MSF closed its programmes in Bakool region at the end of June 2009, the organisation was operating a 293-bed health centre in the regional capital, Huddur, serving a population of approximately 250,000 people. MSF was also running four health posts, three in the Bakool region and one in neighbouring Bay region. In the first six months of the year, over 20,000 people received outpatient consultations and 682 were admitted for inpatient care in these facilities. Medical staff assisted in the delivery of 207 babies and 2,866 children were vaccinated for preventable diseases.

Elsewhere in Somalia, MSF continued to provide emergency medical services in eight regions: Banadir, Bay, Hiraan, Galgaduud, Lower Juba, Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle and Mudug throughout 2009.

See following pages for location-specific information:
Banadir Region

Northern Mogadishu Area
In northern Mogadishu MSF has run one of the few public health facilities in the city’s Yaqshid area since 1994. In 2007, MSF opened three more paediatric outpatient clinics in the Karan, Abdul Aziz (Lido) and Balcad areas, as well as a 50-bed inpatient paediatric clinic in Abdul Aziz. Throughout 2009, 85,156 people received consultations and free medication at the four outpatient clinics. 5,613 women received ante-natal care consultations, while a total of 557 children were treated for malnutrition. Over 2,000 people were admitted for inpatient care. In July 2009, MSF was forced to suspend activities in the hospital and outpatient clinics due to heavy fighting in the area.

The aim of the campaign was to prevent a potential measles outbreak among displaced people living in northern Mogadishu. We targeted children under 15 years old in El Ma’an, Warshiikh and Bal’ad corridor. In total, 62,132 children were vaccinated during this campaign.

Hussein Mohamud, MSF medical supervisor, North Mogadishu

Daynile Area
The MSF project in Daynile hospital, located nine kilometres north of the city, provides life-saving emergency surgery and care for people injured during the ongoing violence in Mogadishu. Following extensive rehabilitation, the facility now comprises 59 beds, and is equipped with two operating theatres, an emergency room and triage area and an intensive care unit. In 2009, 2,391 people received consultations and free medication from MSF in Daynile hospital. 2,036 people were admitted for inpatient care, including 1,137 people who were treated for blast injuries. 537 of these were women and children under the age of 14. MSF also supports the general functioning of the hospital financially and through the supply of medical provisions.

Bay Region

In Dinsor MSF runs a 65-bed facility which offers both inpatient and outpatient care. The inpatient department (IPD), which serves the population of the entire district’s approximately 110,000 people, provides paediatric and adult medical care, treatment for tuberculosis and kala azar; as well as therapeutic feeding for severely malnourished children with associated pathologies. The outpatient department (OPD) provides curative and preventive care and it includes an ambulatory feeding centre for severely malnourished children without medical complications. In 2009, 59,920 people received consultations and free medication. 3,399 women received ante-natal care consultations in the OPD while 801 women received assistance delivering in the maternity department. Over 1,600 children suffering from malnutrition were treated in the hospital’s nutritional programme. In December MSF teams responded to an outbreak of measles in Dinsor, treating 464 people and launching a mass vaccination campaign in which 11,560 children between six months and 15 years old were vaccinated.
Galgaduud Region

In Guri El’s 80-bed Istarlin hospital, MSF provides outpatient services and inpatient services including a paediatric ward, female ward, maternity ward and delivery room, operation theatre and surgical ward, laboratory and x-ray facilities. Preventive services, such as ante-natal care and vaccination, are also offered. The hospital has the capacity to respond to mass casualties. In addition MSF runs two health posts in Galgaduud: one in Dhusa Mareb, the regional capital, and one in Hinder, which opened in January 2008. In 2009, 64,329 people received consultations and free medication in the different outpatient departments of the hospital and health posts. Almost 4,000 patients were admitted to the hospital, of which 799 were women needing assistance with deliveries. 802 patients were admitted for major and minor surgery while 217 children were treated for malnutrition. In early 2009, renewed fighting in Guri El and Dhusa Mareb prompted thousands of civilians to flee their homes. MSF provided medical care and supplied millions of litres of water to the displaced people in the area, and more than 230 war wounded patients were treated in Istarlin hospital. Between April and July 2009, MSF teams treated over 700 people for measles related complications during a measles outbreak in the area.

Lower Juba Region

MSF provides primary, secondary and emergency care in the towns of Marere and Jamaame in the Lower Juba region.

Marere

MSF runs an outpatient department, paediatric inpatient department and maternity unit. Medical staff provide therapeutic and supplementary feeding, surgery, outpatient curative and preventative services, tuberculosis treatment and delivery services, including emergency obstetric care. In 2009, 35,644 people received consultations and free medication, including 12,756 children under the age of five. 1,308 people were admitted to the hospital for treatment and 2,882 children received nutritional care. In August 2009, MSF was able to restart emergency surgical activities in Marere by recruiting a young, female Somali doctor who graduated from medical school in Mogadishu at the end of 2008. In the last five months of 2009, she performed four caesarean sections and 67 minor surgeries. In nearby Jilib MSF was forced to suspend its nutritional activities in August 2009 due to insecurity, leaving hundreds of severely malnourished children without access to crucial medical care. By the end of 2009 MSF had still not been able to restart activities in Jilib.

Hiraan Region

MSF runs the 99 bed regional hospital in Belet Weyne offering free, secondary level health care to the 280,000 inhabitants of the region. MSF provides emergency surgery, trauma care, paediatric and adult medical care, treatment of severe malnutrition, and is prepared to respond to medical emergencies in the region. Emergency and observation rooms are also in place. In 2009, 2,593 people were admitted to the hospital. 971 emergency surgeries were performed, 178 of which were for victims of violence. 1,411 children were treated for malnutrition. Following an increase in the number of measles cases reported, in March 2009 MSF started a mass vaccination campaign in which 26,463 children between six months and 15 years old were vaccinated.

The girl that I operated on was only 18 years old. She’s partially disabled in her right leg and lives with her parents. [...] Her husband is in Kenya now. She was in labour for 24 hours before her parents brought her to the hospital. Without surgery her uterus could have ruptured, killing both her and the baby. Fortunately her parents brought her here in time. The surgery was quite straightforward; we managed to deliver the baby in less than an hour. Both mother and daughter are doing well. In fact the baby has been named Hafsa in my honour.

Dr Hafsa – Surgeon, Marere
Jamaame
MSF runs an outpatient department and inpatient department, where staff provide paediatric and adult medical care, maternity care, treatment for severe malnutrition, nutritional screening and ambulatory care, and systematic surveillance for nutritional emergencies and outbreaks of epidemic diseases. In November 2009 a new ante-natal department was opened. Throughout the year, 1,572 patients were admitted to the inpatient department for treatment. 43,828 people received consultations and free medication in the outpatient department, more than twice the number treated in the previous year as patients increasingly arrive at the hospital from other regions in order to receive free, quality care. A total of 1,938 children suffering from malnutrition received treatment in 2009.

Lower Shabelle
Region
In Hawa Abdi, MSF runs an outpatient department, paediatric inpatient department, cholera and diarrhoea treatment centre, nutrition programme, water trucking and distribution of blankets and other non-food items. In Afgooye MSF runs an outpatient department as well as an ambulatory feeding programme and supports the activities of the hospital by providing drugs and medical materials, as well as paying staff incentives. In 2009, 162,782 people received consultations and free medication in these facilities, more than half of which were children under five years old. In total MSF treated 14,187 malnourished children under the age of five in 2009. At the end of August, following an increase in the number of measles cases attending the MSF clinic in Afgooye, teams started a mass vaccination campaign in the corridor between Mogadishu and Afgooye. 31,785 children were vaccinated and 296 people were treated between the end of August and October.
**Middle Shabelle Region**

MSF provides basic health care through a network of four health centres in the urban and rural areas of Jowhar, Mahaday and Balcad. The health centres provide outpatient preventive and curative services; maternal and paediatric care; and an extended programme for immunization through mobile and fixed clinics. A maternity ward provides services for natural deliveries; caesarean sections, family planning and care for victims of sexual violence. There is also a nutritional programme including a stabilisation centre and ambulatory care. In 2009, 118,968 people received consultations and free medication and 26,542 received ante and post-natal consultations at the OPD. More than 5,336 malnourished children were admitted to the therapeutic feeding centres for malnutrition treatment and management of related medical complications. A total of 1,666 babies were delivered in the maternity ward. In July MSF teams tackled an outbreak of measles in Jowhar, treating over 1,000 people in camps for internally displaced persons in Jowhar itself and another 3,756 in Bal‘ad, Warshiik and El Ma‘än. 62,132 children were vaccinated.

*My neighbours told me about this hospital which is a six hour walk from my village, and I was told I would get free medication. Since then, whenever my children get sick, I come to the MSF clinic in Jowhar and I very much appreciate the free medical services I get for my children.*

Mother of a child receiving treatment for malnutrition, Jowhar

**Mudug Region**

In Mudug region MSF works in both South and North Galcayo. In South Galcayo hospital MSF provides outpatient curative and preventive services, including maternal care and vaccination, and inpatient care. Medical staff provide paediatric care, maternity care, including emergency obstetric care, therapeutic feeding, tuberculosis treatment and surgery. This is the only free surgery available for people in the area and many patients come from as far away as Ethiopia to receive care. In 2009, 41,765 people received outpatient consultations and free medication at South Galcayo hospital. MSF staff assisted in the delivery of 990 babies and 360 surgeries were performed.

In North Galcayo clinic, MSF provides tuberculosis treatment and therapeutic feeding. In both locations systematic monitoring for nutritional emergencies and outbreaks of epidemic diseases for the region is available.

In both locations 763 people suffering from TB were started on treatment and 10,967 vaccinations were given in 2009. At the end of the year the number of children under treatment for severe malnutrition reached an all time high, with 2,281 children receiving treatment in South Galcayo Hospital and North Galcayo Feeding Centre between October and December alone.

*When I first came here, I was terribly ill and could not walk. I come from Buhoodle town and it is very far from here, but this is the only place I was diagnosed with TB. I have been here for two months now and I was told that I was left with four more months but I am committed to completing this medication. I am fully informed about the process of treatment - they give us lectures on this regularly.*

Bashir, 35 year old TB patient, Galcayo
The Charter of MSF

*Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)* is a private international association. The association is made up mainly of doctors and health sector workers and is also open to all other professions which might help in achieving its aims. All of its members agree to honour the following principles:

*Médecins Sans Frontières* provides assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict. They do so irrespective of race, religion, creed or political convictions.

*Médecins Sans Frontières* observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and claims full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions.

Members undertake to respect their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic, or religious powers.

As volunteers, members understand the risks and dangers of the missions they carry out and make no claim for themselves or their assigns for any form of compensation other than that which the association might be able to afford them.

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The MSF Somalia web site features information about MSF in Somalia in the Somali language. MSF’s international web site (www.msf.org) provides more in-depth information for those who also read English.