



1 March 2022

MSF condemns armed robbery and burning of MSF vehicles near Yei, South Sudan

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) strongly condemns the brazen armed robbery of one of its medical teams and the burning of two of its vehicles on the road outside of Yei, South Sudan, during the morning of 28 February 2022. Due to this incident, MSF has had to immediately suspend its movements to support health facilities outside of Yei, undermining access to urgently needed medical care for tens of thousands of people.

“We are deeply shocked by this unacceptable attack on the provision of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance for communities in need of medical assistance,” says MSF operational coordinator Sandra Lamarque. *“As a result of the attack, our outreach movements to communities surrounding Yei have been suspended until appropriate security conditions can be re-established which would permit us to safely continue our life-saving work.”*

At approximately 9:15am yesterday, seven staff wearing MSF identification and travelling in two clearly marked MSF vehicles were travelling to Minyori on the Yei-Maridi road in order to support the provision of treatment for malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea – three of the leading causes of infant mortality in South Sudan.

Before they arrived, the medical team was stopped by a large group of armed men and forced at gunpoint to disembark from their vehicles. They were taken into the bush, where a group of civilians were also being held by the armed group. The team were threatened and robbed of both MSF property and personal belongings.

Following the incident, the team were released without physical injury, but the two MSF Landcruisers had been set ablaze, completely destroying the vehicles and forcing the team to evacuate to safety on foot. Medicines destined to support community healthcare workers in the provision of medical care were also stolen from the vehicles.

The incident occurred on a road which MSF teams have routinely travelled for several years in the course of their medical work. As always, MSF operates in full transparency with all authorities and armed actors in the area, and in line with our principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality.

“MSF is one of the only medical actors supporting several of the medical facilities in this area outside of Yei town. When such attacks occur it is the local population who suffer, as it severely compromises healthcare access for the communities,” said Lamarque. *“We call on all armed actors to uphold their responsibilities under international humanitarian law and respect the provision of humanitarian assistance.”*

MSF is an independent, neutral and impartial humanitarian organization, which has been working in South Sudan for more than 40 years. MSF have been providing medical assistance to communities in Yei and surrounding areas since 2016, supporting the pediatric ward of Yei Hospital, four primary health facilities, community-based medical care and emergency response.

MSF has been providing neutral, independent and impartial medical humanitarian assistance in South Sudan since 1983. Today we are working in over 14 projects across the country, delivering lifesaving medical services to communities most in need of them. Our teams work in hospitals and clinics throughout the country, running some of our biggest programmes worldwide. We provide basic and specialised healthcare and respond to emergencies and outbreaks affecting isolated communities, internally displaced people and refugees from Sudan.

For any media enquiries, please contact MSF Field Communications Coordinator on MSF-SSudan-Com-Coordinator@msf.org