



[MSF Sites](#)

[About MSF](#)
[Activities](#)
[News](#)
[Resources](#)

MSF is an international, independent, medical humanitarian organisation

Share

## Libya: Detainees tortured and denied medical care

MSF suspends work in detention centres in Misrata

26 January 2012



– An MSF physiotherapist works in one of Misrata's detention centres, where MSF is suspending operations.

– Detainees in the Libyan city of Misrata are being tortured and denied urgent medical care, leading the international medical humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to suspend its operations in detention centres in Misrata, MSF announced today.

MSF teams began working in Misrata's detention centres in August, 2011, to treat war-wounded detainees. Since then, MSF doctors were increasingly confronted with patients who suffered injuries caused by torture during interrogation sessions. The interrogations were held outside the detention centres. In total, MSF treated 115 people who had torture-related wounds and reported all the cases to the relevant authorities in Misrata. Since January, several of the patients returned to interrogation centres have even been tortured again.

"Some officials have sought to exploit and obstruct MSF's medical work," said MSF General Director Christopher Stokes. "Patients were brought to us in the middle of interrogation for medical care, in order to make them fit for further interrogation. This is unacceptable. Our role is to provide medical care to war casualties and sick detainees, not to repeatedly treat the same patients between torture sessions."

MSF medical teams were also asked to treat patients inside the interrogation centres, which was categorically refused by

the organisation.

The most alarming case occurred on January 3, when MSF doctors treated a group of 14 detainees returning from an interrogation centre located outside the detention facilities. Despite previous MSF demands for the immediate end of torture, nine of the 14 detainees suffered numerous injuries and displayed obvious signs of torture.

The MSF team informed the National Army Security Service—the agency responsible for interrogations—that a number of patients needed to be transferred to hospitals for urgent and specialised care. All but one of the detainees were again deprived of essential medical care and were subjected to renewed interrogations and torture outside the detention centres.

After meeting with various authorities, MSF sent an official letter on January 9 to the Misrata Military Council, the Misrata Security Committee, the National Army Security Service, and the Misrata Local Civil Council, again demanding an immediate stop to any form of ill treatment of detainees.

"No concrete action has been taken," said Stokes. "Instead, our team received four new torture cases. We have therefore come to the decision to suspend our medical activities in the detention centres."

MSF has been present in Misrata since April 2011, in the midst of the Libyan conflict. Since August 2011, MSF has worked in Misrata's detention centres, treating war wounded, performing surgeries, and providing orthopaedic follow-up care to people who had suffered bone fractures. MSF medical teams have carried out 2,600 consultations, including 311 for violent trauma.

MSF will continue its mental health support activities in schools and health facilities in Misrata, as well as its assistance to 3,000 African migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons in and around Tripoli.

MSF is an international humanitarian medical organisation that has worked in Libya since February 25, 2011. To ensure the independence of its medical work, MSF relies solely on private donations to finance its activities in Libya and does not accept any funding from governments, donor agencies, or military or political groups.

## Tags

[Healthcare exclusion \(http://www.msf.org/topics/healthcare-exclusion\)](http://www.msf.org/topics/healthcare-exclusion), [Libya \(http://www.msf.org/country/libya\)](http://www.msf.org/country/libya), [Press release \(http://www.msf.org/content-type/press-release\)](http://www.msf.org/content-type/press-release), [Torture \(http://www.msf.org/topics/torture\)](http://www.msf.org/topics/torture)

[All tags \(/all-tags\) ▶](#)

## Read more

[Libya: The integrity of medical facilities... \(/article/libya-integrity-](#)



[Libya: Providing urgent medical care in S... \(/article/libya-providing-](#)



[Libya: 'Almost all of the hospitals' in T... \(/article/libya-almost-all-](#)



---

### [About MSF](#)

[Charter & principles](#)

[The MSF movement](#)

[Finances](#)

[Staff](#)

[Affiliated organisations](#)

[Press kit](#)

[Contact MSF](#)

### [Activities](#)

[Overview](#)

[Opening a programme](#)

[Closing a programme](#)

[Glossary](#)

### [News](#)

[Latest news](#)

[Articles](#)

[Press releases](#)

[Op-eds](#)

[Press kit](#)

[Photos](#)

[Videos](#)

### [Resources](#)

[Latest resources](#)

[Annual reports](#)

[Reports](#)

[Medical resources](#)

[Factsheets](#)

[Microsites](#)

### [Join MSF](#)

[Donate](#)

[International vacancies](#)

[Before you apply](#)

[How to apply](#)

[Working in the field](#)

[Contact MSF](#)