



**MEDECINS
SANS FRONTIERES**

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Médecins Sans Frontières
Office for Papua New Guinea
PO Box 7138 Boroko NCD

11th November 1993

Hon. Michael Ogio
Minister of State
Responsible for Bougainville Affairs
Parliament House

Dear Minister,

Subject : Non-renewal of Memorandum of Understanding

We wish respectfully to inform you that Médecins Sans Frontières will not be renewing the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by you on behalf of your Government on 11th December 1992 in regard to the provision of health services for the civilian population of the island of Bougainville. The reasons for this are as follows.

As you are aware, Minister, the safety and well-being of the civilian population of the island of Bougainville have been seriously jeopardized by the armed conflict that is now four years old. All available information concurs that their suffering has been exacerbated by the blockade of the island since April 1990, and by the anarchy that is apparently reigning in the non-controlled zones.

Urgent vital needs, most especially in the medical sector, have been and continue to be expressed by all parties concerned, including representatives of your own Government, the former Interim Government of North Solomons, the Red Cross, and Church authorities.

After more than one year of activities on Bougainville, albeit hindered as they have been, we wish to share with you the following observations :

Owing to the blockade of the island and the refusal by your Government to permit land access to them, the population in the non-controlled zones of Bougainville, estimated to comprise some 50,000 persons, has no access to even the most basic medical services. It is certain that the lack of preventive and curative care over the past three to four years has caused elevated death rates in the population, and most especially among the most vulnerable groups such as children and pregnant women.

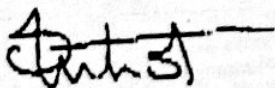
The population living in the Care Centres are also receiving less than adequate health care owing to logistical difficulties in the supply of medicines and the lack of qualified personnel, especially doctors, in sufficient numbers. The latter problem leads to extremely expensive medical evacuations by helicopter. Moreover there is an urgent need to implement an immunization programme for children.

In recent months Médecins Sans Frontières staff based both in Port Moresby and Buka, North Solomons, have redoubled their efforts to obtain the necessary access to these populations but the necessary clearances for transport remain very difficult to receive and the authorization for full-time operational installation at a Bougainville site or sites, such as the neediest Care Centres, has not been accorded.

Médecins Sans Frontières remains deeply concerned by the plight of the civilian population of Bougainville. Nevertheless, the absence of humanitarian access for its medical teams leaves us with no choice but to decline to renew a Memorandum of Understanding which has in fact never been fully respected since its signing one year ago.

Médecins Sans Frontières will communicate to its different international partners the reasons for its withdrawal from Bougainville.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Odile Delacote
Programme Director
Médecins Sans Frontières - Paris

cc Hon. Pias Wingti, Prime Minister
Hon. Paul Tohian, Minister of Defence
Hon. John Kaputin, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr Brown Bai, First Secretary PM
Mr Isaac Ake, First Secretary Health