Title:
Protecting the Medical Mission: Implementation Matters

Sponsors and Organizers:
Switzerland and Colombia with ICRC, MSF ICMM, Canada, Japan, Netherlands, Spain, and Slovakia

Time and Date: Thursday, 22 June 2017, 8:30-9:45
Room XXIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year’s theme: Restoring Humanity and Leaving No One Behind: Working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.

Background and objectives
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2286 constitutes a significant achievement at multilateral level, condemning acts of violence, attacks and threats against the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities, and calling for reinforcing the protection of the medical mission as a component of the protection of civilians. Attacks on health care lead to great suffering for patients, medical personnel, and local communities at large. They imperil hard-won development gains, setting back the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

More than a year after the adoption of this resolution and a letter by the UN Secretary-General spelling out recommendations on implementation, increased awareness has not yet translated into a reduction of attacks, obstructions and threats, which continue unabatedly, and often deliberately. There is thus a distinct need to discuss implementation at national level, the role of governments, as well as regional and global approaches. The momentum of Resolution 2286 must not be lost, and requires urgent and dedicated action.

Building on the high-level side-event organized during the WHA on 22 May, which confirmed the critical importance and global nature of this issue, and the Open Debate on Protection of Civilians at the UN Security Council on 25 May, this side-event takes the discussion a step further towards concrete perspectives for implementation. It will bring on board a diversity of perspectives, cognizant of the need for joint efforts: First, it will reach out to two field practitioners from leading humanitarian organisations, allowing unfiltered insight into the realities on the ground and the potential for preventive steps. Second, it will feature a medical military expert, a dimension absent so far from discussions at multilateral level. Third, it will join those voices with that of a diplomatic mission, combining operational expertise with policy outreach and making the case for how governments can play a key connecting role in support of existing efforts.
by the UN system, the Red Cross family, Médecins Sans Frontières and other civil society organizations. The side-event will serve as example of breaking the silos, allowing a broader understanding of the measures needed and identifying possible next steps for implementation.

**Discussion points**

Against this backdrop, the side-event will focus on the following suggested questions and discussion points:

- What more can be done, particularly by governments, to ensure attacks against the medical mission are stopped and remain a taboo?
- Which aspects of UNSCR 2286 and the UNSG recommendations can we focus on as a matter of priority, in which process and timeframe?
- Which national and regional experiences exist in implementing measures to protect the medical mission and from which we can draw inspiration?

**Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations**

The side-event aims at identifying concrete avenues for implementation of UNSCR 2286 and other relevant texts, covering a) specific suggestions for next steps that can be taken by governments individually or jointly with others, b) exchange and information sharing on national experiences for inspiration elsewhere, c) views on areas of priority within UNSCR 2286 and the UNSG recommendations. At the level of New York, Geneva and capitals, the side-event shall serve as a building block for further dedicated action, building on previous exchanges at the UN Security Council Open Debate and the WHA side-event.

**Format**

**Chair and Moderator**

- H.E. Amb. Manuel Bessler, Head of Swiss Humanitarian Aid, Swiss FDFA

**Panel composition:**

**Videolink:** ICRC Senior Representative from Yemen

- Field Representative of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
- H.E. Amb. Beatriz LONDOÑO SOTO, Permanent Representative of Colombia
- Mj Gen (ret) Roger Van Hoof, Secretary-General, International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM)

**Background Material**

- MSF, Not A Target: http://notatarget.msf.org/
- Role of Geneva: http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=ed04d340eff66f5efeb72c267&id=e2ecab6c18&e=8048fa85ea
Contact

For more information, please contact:

*Mr. Oliver Hoehne, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office in Geneva, oliver.hoehne@eda.admin.ch, +41 58 482 24 34*

*Mr. Juan Carlos Moreno Gutiérrez, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations Office in Geneva, juan.moreno@cancilleria.gov.co, +41 22 798 45 54*