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### Peace and Doctors Without Borders

The enormous death toll and suffering that came out of both World Wars proved the need for peace on our planet. One of the key goals of the international community has been peace-keeping ever since, yet wars, violent clashes, and atrocities keep happening. Wars and violent conflicts are not only caused by religious or political differences, but also as a result of imbalance of wealth between populations and countries. In a video-interview, Chris Brasher, a veteran of Doctors Without Borders, states, “When people are less rich, they are more obliged to be dependent on each other”(“Interview: MSF Veteran Chris Brasher” 00:14:00-00:14:06), yet very wealthy people tend to become more independent and focused on protecting their wealth. As a result, wealthy nations may prioritize their economic interests and resources, such as minerals, over peace in poor and underdeveloped countries. In addition, natural disasters and diseases still devastate many communities worldwide because they lack the proper resources for adequate healthcare access. There are people, however, who are committed to work for peace. In 1971, a group of French doctors and journalists formed an organization called Medecines Sans Frontieres (MSF), or Doctors Without Borders. This non-governmental organization provides humanitarian medical care to patients in war conflict and natural disaster zones as well as to populations displaced from their homes or plagued by disease epidemics.

According to MSF’s official video “This is Doctors Without Borders”, today it has around 33,000 staff members, and who are active in over 70 countries worldwide (00:00:23-00:00:29), although most of its services are provided to the poorest regions in Africa, Americas, and some parts of Europe. One of Doctor Without Borders’ missions is to provide lifesaving medical care to people in armed conflict zones. MSF is unique in its neutral political position and its

impartiality as it treats people regardless of their race, religion, gender, or political affiliation. The organization negotiates with all sides of the conflict to get access to communities with the greatest medical needs. Because of its neutrality, the conditions of Geneva Convention allows MSF to provide medical treatment to those affected by war regardless of their affiliation. Even when the fighting continues, MSF makes a difference with the doctors' free and high quality treatment ranging from emergency surgeries, using a fully functioning inflatable operating room, to obstetrics and primary care. While its primary purpose is medical treatment, it also works to provide access to food and water to the displaced populations.

MSF operates in some of the worst war zones on the planet and treats displaced populations, who fled the violence. The organization's official website regularly publishes updates on the current humanitarian crises, such as the ones happening in Sudan, DR Congo, and Gaza, to which the doctors are responding ([DoctorsWithoutBorders.com](http://DoctorsWithoutBorders.com)). So, MSF provides unbiased, first-hand accounts on the crises and the direct impact of violence on the most vulnerable groups: women and children. MSF doctors and journalists often speak out against the violence and war atrocities committed against the civilians by demanding action from the international community through research, reports, protests, and demonstrations.

Another mission of the Doctors Without Borders is treatment of patients in the poorest regions of the world, whose communities are devastated by diseases like malaria, cholera, and measles due to the lack of resources. According to the MSF's official video, the doctors treat the sick and launch prevention campaigns through vaccination and education. As another example, MSF led the response to a big Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014-15. In a similar way as with the armed conflicts, MSF advocates for the sick patients, demanding lowered medical costs for treatments and diagnostic tools from the international community.

MSF's continuous efforts to improve people's lives and health regardless of their race, gender, income, or political affiliation makes them a great advocate for peace and for a better world. As it is my goal to have a career in medicine, this organization gives me hope for the

future. Medical providers need to provide the same level of care for patients without prejudice. Based on these standards, MSF doctors develop a strong and unbiased stance against any physical or psychological force to cause harm as they regularly witness the direct impact of violence and neglect towards individuals. This makes them especially understand the importance and necessity of working towards peace.

## Works Cited

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