

Beat: News

Myanmar orders Médecins Sans Frontières to cease operations

-, 28.02.2014, 22:23 Time

USPA News - The government of Myanmar (Burma) on Friday ordered the independent aid agency Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to cease operations over claims of bias in its medical treatment, officials said. Some 30,000 HIV/AIDS patients and more than 3,000 Tuberculosis patients in Myanmar will be unable to receive the treatment they need after MSF clinics in Rakhine, Shan, and Kachin states were ordered to close.

A presidential spokesperson accused MSF of a 'lack of impartiality' by favoring the treatment of Rakhine's Muslim Rohingya minority. Rakhine is a conflict-ridden state in Myanmar where the Rohingya people are discriminated against and denied basic rights. There have been several reported outbreaks of mass violence against them since June 2012, killing nearly 300 people and displacing more than 14,000 others. The Rohingya people are considered stateless and are rejected by both Myanmar and neighboring Bangladesh. The charity MSF provided emergency assistance to Rohingya displaced by the recent violence in the state. MSF has acknowledged that it has prioritized the treatment of the Rohingya community over any other people in the region, the BBC reported. The aid group delivers emergency aid to people affected by conflicts, epidemics, natural disasters, and lack of healthcare, and MSF was the only source of healthcare for Rohingya. "MSF is deeply shocked by this unilateral decision and extremely concerned about the fate of tens of thousands of patients currently under our care across the country," the organization said in a statement released on Friday. Contrary to the biased treatment allegations, the MSF said it "offers assistance to people based on need, irrespective of race, religion, gender, or political affiliation." MSF, which was founded in France in 1971, said it is negotiating reinstatement with the Myanmar Government.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1947/myanmar-orders-mdecins-sans-frontieres-to-cess-operations.html>

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