

## Patients

Tabarre Hospital, Haiti - December 2019



Picture MSF300283

*Slaij lifts his shirt to expose the injuries to his abdomen. Before arriving at MSF's Tabarre Hospital, Slaij was taken to two other hospitals but none of these centers could take care of him due to the lack of supplies. Photo: Lunos Saint Brave / MSF*

### **A song to thank MSF**

Slaij<sup>1</sup>, a 37-year-old mechanic, was involved in a road accident in Cabaret (a town about 42 km from Port-au-Prince) on December 16, 2019. His car ran off the road. But Slaij had time to jump before the vehicle fell into a canal. "Everyone thought I was dead," Slaij says. X-rays revealed fractures of two ribs. At MSF's Tabarre Hospital, he was operated on and is now out of danger.

Before arriving at MSF, Slaij was taken to two other hospitals in Arcahaie commune in the Western Department of Haiti. But none of these centers could take care of him. The centers that received him had to transfer him elsewhere due to lack of adequate supplies. Once admitted to MSF's Tabarre hospital, he was quickly sent to the operating room for the necessary care. His condition is now stable, and he counts the days until he can return home.

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<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym has been used by the patient's request.

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"After the X-ray was taken at the second hospital, the doctor told me that he needed to send me either to Saint-Marc [one hour away] or to Port-au-Prince, because he could not treat my injury due to the lack of materials available at hospital. I once visited a friend who was receiving care here [MSF's Tabarre hospital] after an accident. I saw the quality of care. So when I was told about my transfer to another hospital, I quickly asked to take me to MSF," says Slaj.

Slaj says after his recovery, he will write and record a song for MSF. "This song aims to thank MSF, not only for me but also for all the other patients who would have died without the work of MSF. It is also intended to tell MSF not to be discouraged. There are many people who cannot afford health care in Haiti. For example, a motorcycle taxi driver who has an accident cannot afford to pay for all the care his case would require." The care provided by MSF is therefore important.

Since July 2018, Haiti has been caught in a worsening political and economic crisis. Due to the many shortages of medicines, oxygen, blood, medical supplies, fuel and human resources, the country's medical structures are struggling to provide basic health care. Faced with the current crisis and increasing humanitarian needs, MSF has decided to increase its interventions for the first time since the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew in 2016. In November 2019, we reopened our emergency trauma center at Tabarre in Port-au-Prince, and our teams are now working to increase our capacity for care by adding beds and staff. In the first five weeks, 547 patients came to our emergency room, including 150 with life-threatening conditions.

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Picture MSF300286

Anderson Alexander recalls the details of the shooting that sent him to MSF's Tabarre hospital. Photo : Nico D'Auterive / MSF

### ***In the wrong place at the wrong time***

A 30-year-old father living with his wife and two children, Anderson Alexandre was shot and injured on Saturday, December 21, 2019, in the Delmas district of Port-au-Prince while he was out buying water for his family. "I entered my home. It was around 11:00 p.m. Since there was no water at home, I went out to buy it. I didn't want to sleep without having water available. As I waited for the change, I heard bursts of fire. A car was driving down the street and someone was shooting people. Despite my reflex to lie on the ground after hearing the shots, I was hit by two bullets in my right foot."

Several people were injured. One person, riddled with bullets, died near him. "I feel like they wanted to kill us all. I pretended to die for fear that the shooters would see that I was still alive and decide to end my life completely. The shooting continued while I was lying on the ground. The body of the deceased person protected me a little bit from the bullets. Otherwise, I would have been injured more seriously. "

Anderson's wife was quickly made aware of the situation, and an ambulance was called. "Intuitively, I asked to be taken to the MSF hospital. Fortunately for me, doctors were available. I was operated on the same evening. At first, it was very difficult for me because the event was traumatic. I did nothing but eat for almost five days. But with the support of

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other patients, I am beginning to overcome the difficulties. We laugh and support each other."

Anderson works as a security guard for a company. He says he fears the days to come, since he will not be able to support his family. "They will surely remove me from my job. My daughter is very young. And now, I no longer have all my mobility to meet the needs of my daughter. It's a big shock to my health and to my family. "

Despite everything, Anderson only asks for peace so that people in Haiti can move freely without being afraid. He invites others to send messages of peace to help find a solution to the country's problems.



*Picture MSF300285*

*Photo : Nico D'Auterive / MSF*

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