**Democratic Republic of Congo: MSF staff member critically injured in Masisi town after shots hit MSF base**

*Kinshasa/Goma/Brussels, 20 February 2025* – A staff member from international medical organisation Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has been critically injured after shots hit the MSF base in Masisi town, in Democratic Republic of Congo’s North Kivu province, on the morning of 20 February. A child who had sought refuge with his family in the MSF compound was also wounded by gunfire. MSF strongly condemns the shootings, which seriously undermine the principle of protecting aid workers and humanitarian facilities in times of conflict.

"This morning, one of our colleagues on duty at the MSF base in Masisi was seriously injured by a bullet – one of many bullets to hit our premises over recent weeks,” says MSF head of programmes Stephan Goetghebuer.  “Unfortunately his life is in danger. During the shootings, a child who had taken refuge at our base was also slightly injured by a bullet. We strongly condemn this latest episode of violence, which has directly impacted a humanitarian facility that should be protected from gunfire.”

Since early January, the area in and around Masisi town in southern North Kivu province has been fought over almost daily by VDP/Wazalendo fighters (allied with the Congolese army) and the M23/Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC). The clashes have led to an influx of wounded – most of them civilians – at Masisi general referral hospital, which is supported by MSF, while thousands of people have sought refuge at the MSF base and the hospital compound.

"On Thursday, intense fighting, including the use of heavy weapons, took place in the town itself, which has been controlled by the M23/AFC since mid-January," says Goetghebuer. "Notably, fighting took place between the MSF base and the market in front of the hospital, where thousands of people have been sheltering for days.”

Since early January, Masisi hospital, the MSF base and the immediate surroundings have been the scene of numerous serious incidents.

On 16 January, two civilians were shot in front of Masisi hospital; one was killed. On 19 January, the hospital and MSF base came under fire and two MSF staff were injured when a rocket hit MSF’s garage next to the hospital. On 28 January, a woman was shot dead during clashes that took place between the MSF base and nearby MSF office. On 16 February, a Ministry of Health staff member was wounded by a stray bullet that entered the hospital.

"These violent, recurring incidents are unacceptable," says Goetghebuer. "Despite our repeated appeals to the warring parties to protect humanitarian and health facilities, the safety of patients and medical and humanitarian staff is clearly not being taken into account. Humanitarian law is being flouted. This must stop.”

Masisi hospital, supported by MSF since 2007, has received dozens of war-wounded in recent days.

In view of the repeated violent incidents affecting MSF’s work in Masisi town, MSF is currently considering how to adapt its activities in the region, where people’s medical and humanitarian needs are massive.

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