




MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

MEDEVAC

PERMANENT MEDICAL HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME

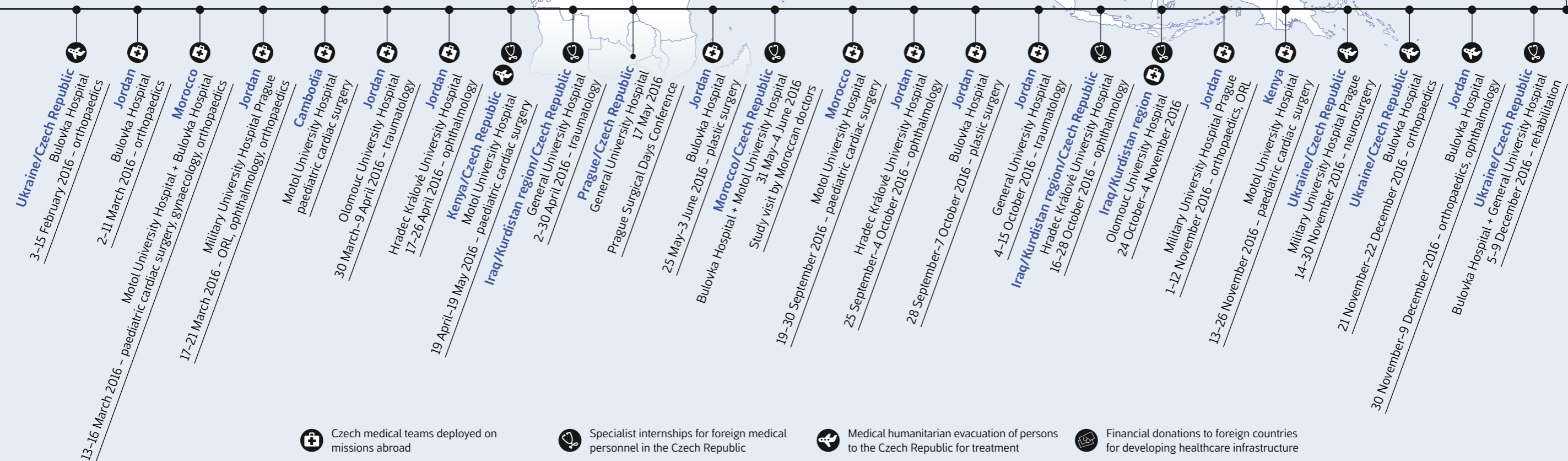
2016



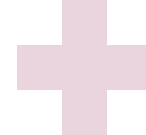
MEDEVAC Programme Implementation in 2016



Under Government Resolution No. 1099 of 5 December 2016, financial donations totalling EUR 426,000 were made to foreign countries (Ukraine, Iraq, Lebanon).



A Word of Introduction from the Director of the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic



"In Jordan alone, which hosts more than a million Syrian refugees, Czech doctors performed a total of 583 highly specialised operations this year, involving paediatric cardiac surgery giving a new lease of life, ophthalmic operations enabling to regain sight and plastic surgery and orthopaedic procedures enabling people to return again to the job market."

I am very pleased to be able to present this summary of the results of the MEDEVAC Permanent medical humanitarian programme 2016.

In that year, the Czech Republic continued with even greater intensity in providing medical assistance to vulnerable groups of people in regions facing the consequences of armed conflict or other long-term instability.

Please allow me acquaint you with some of the results which we can be justly proud of.

In Jordan alone, which hosts more than a million Syrian refugees, Czech doctors performed a total of 583 highly specialised operations this year, involving paediatric heart operations giving a new lease of life, ophthalmic operations enabling to regain sight and plastic surgery and orthopaedic procedures enabling people to return again to the job market.

The Czech physiotherapists successfully launched a project in Ukraine, setting up comprehensive and sys-

tematic physiotherapeutic care that had until then been lacking in public healthcare.

The Motol University Hospital Children's Heart Centre continued in successful cooperation with partners from Morocco and Kenya in child healthcare, a field in which the Czech Republic has long been achieving some of the best results in Europe.

The MEDEVAC Programme also newly initiated successful cooperation with international organisations, providing them with funds to cover urgent humanitarian needs in the healthcare sector in the Middle East.

I would like to conclude by offering my gratitude to everybody who contributed to all of these successes of the MEDEVAC Programme, which is a concrete example of Czech aid to refugees and to the countries that host these large groups of refugees.

Mgr. Pavla Novotná

The MEDEVAC Permanent Medical Humanitarian Programme

The MEDEVAC Permanent medical humanitarian programme (the "MEDEVAC Programme") is directed at providing specialist medical care to vulnerable groups of population in regions impacted by a refugee crisis or natural disaster. Treatment is provided free of charge and exclusively to civilians. The MEDEVAC Programme also shields the activities in the area of development cooperation in countries where specialised medical care is not yet adequately advanced.

The MEDEVAC Programme has been implemented since 1993. In 2015, a government resolution established the MEDEVAC Permanent medical humanitarian programme, ensuring

the annual continuation of implementation of its activities together with a permanent budget (EUR 2.2 million). The MEDEVAC Programme is managed by the interdepartmental Working Group for Implementation of the MEDEVAC Permanent medical humanitarian programme with the Ministry of the Interior being the main coordinator. Close cooperation with other Working Group members from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, Defence and Industry and Trade takes place in the course of managing the Programme.



Implementation of the MEDEVAC Programme

- ⊕ Medical Humanitarian evacuation of persons to the Czech Republic for treatment (since 1993)
- ⊕ Czech medical teams deployed on missions abroad (since 2013)
- ⊕ Specialist internships for foreign medical personnel (since 2015)
- ⊕ Provision of funds to foreign countries for developing healthcare infrastructure (since 2016)



**The MEDEVAC
Programme
in 2016** 

The MEDEVAC Programme in figures

Bulovka Hospital/2016/
plastic surgery/
medical team mission/Jordan



Until 2013, the MEDEVAC Programme primarily involved medical evacuations of patients for treatment in the Czech Republic.

2013

- **1** medical team deployed abroad
- **6** specialist operative procedures abroad
- **1** medical humanitarian evacuation from Syria to the Czech Republic for treatment (2 patients + legal guardians)

2014

- **3** medical teams deployed abroad
- **36** specialist operative procedures abroad
- more than **90** specialist examinations
- **1** medical humanitarian evacuation from Ukraine to the Czech Republic for treatment (39 patients + legal guardians)

Hradec Králové University Hospital/2016/ophthalmology/
training Kurdish doctors/
Czech Republic



2015

- **12** medical teams deployed abroad
- **244** specialist operative procedures abroad
- more than **500** specialist examinations
- **33** non-invasive procedures performed
- payment for a cardiac surgical operation abroad at the urgent request of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
- **2** medical humanitarian evacuations from Ukraine to the Czech Republic for treatment (10 patients + legal guardians)
- **2** specialist internships for foreign healthcare personnel in Czech hospitals (10 persons/ Iraq – Kurdistan Region/Ukraine)

Motol University Hospital/2016/
paediatric cardiac surgery/
training Kenyan doctor and nurse,
medical humanitarian evacuation for
treatment/Czech Republic





2016

- **15** medical teams deployed abroad
- **622** specialist operative procedures abroad
- more than **800** specialist examinations
- **231** non-invasive procedures performed
- **3** medical humanitarian evacuations from Ukraine to the Czech Republic for treatment (**5** patients + legal guardians)
- **3** specialist internships for foreign medical personnel in Czech hospitals (**20** persons/Iraq – Kurdistan Region/ Kenya/Ukraine)
- Prague Surgical Days conference – presentation of MEDEVAC Programme activities
- financial donations totalling **EUR 460,000** aimed at equipping hospitals and doctor training in Ukraine, Lebanon, Iraq and Nepal



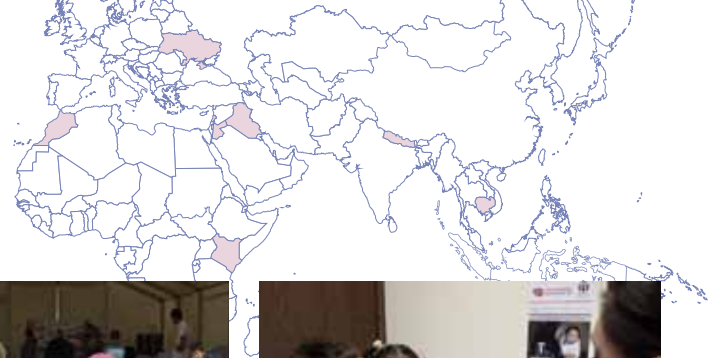
Military University Hospital Prague/2016/
orthopaedics/medical team mission/Jordan






ADRA Int./2016/
financial donation/
Lebanon

Project countries in 2016

Total costs of implementation of the MEDEVAC Programme in 2016 reached nearly EUR 1.9 million.




UKRAINE

-  3 patients for treatment to the Czech Republic
-  2 financial donations
-  2 internships in the Czech Republic

Total cost EUR 163,000






JORDAN

-  11 medical teams
- 583 operations

Total cost EUR 1 million




IRAQ

-  1 medical team
-  2 financial donations
-  16 interns in the Czech Republic

Total cost EUR 248,000





LEBANON

-  1 financial donation

Total cost EUR 92,600






MOROCCO

-  1 medical team
- 13 operations
-  study visit by Moroccan doctors

Total cost EUR 48,000




KENYA

-  1 medical team
- 13 operations
-  3 patients for treatment in the Czech Republic
-  2 internships in the Czech Republic



Total cost EUR 122,000



CAMBODIA

-  1 medical team
- 13 operations

Total cost EUR 92,600



-  Czech medical teams deployed on missions abroad
-  Specialist internships for foreign medical personnel in the Czech Republic



NEPAL

-  financial donation

Total cost EUR 33,000

-  Medical humanitarian evacuation of persons to the Czech Republic for treatment
-  Financial donations to foreign countries for developing healthcare infrastructure

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic as a partner to the MEDEVAC Programme

**JUDr. Ivan Jančárek,
Vice Deputy Minister of the Section for Non-European Countries,
Economic and Development Cooperation of the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic**

The MEDEVAC Programme is a significant tool of the Czech Republic for coping with humanitarian crises around the world, which suitably complements humanitarian aid provided to foreign countries with the objective of saving lives and relieving the suffering of the people impacted by natural disaster or conflict.

In 2016 the Programme focused on nine countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe that are imminently affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters or long-term instability. The 60% increase in funds provided for this programme in 2016 as against the preceding year, and the rising total humanitarian aid budget demonstrate that the Czech Republic is eager and capable of reacting effectively to the plight of people of all nationalities who, through no fault of their own, find themselves under desperate circumstances.

I am proud that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a long-term and stable partner of this programme. I should in particular praise the work of our embassies abroad which, despite difficult local conditions, make the necessary preparations for implementing the MEDEVAC Programme and provide support to Czech medical teams that perform operative procedures and specialist examinations on the ground. The MEDEVAC Programme is not just proof of the capabilities of various sectors of state administration (currently five ministries are cooperating on it), but primarily it is a calling card demonstrating the high level of professional know-how and skills and, often too, self-sacrifice and courage of Czech doctors and other medical professionals.

Although the MEDEVAC Programme is directed at provision of medical care to vulnerable groups in regions suffering humanitarian catastrophes that cannot

be reliably foreseen, we do all we can to ensure that this does not remain simply an isolated, one-off provision of aid. The extension of the Programme in 2016 to cover financial donations for support and development of healthcare infrastructure in affected areas and Czech medical experts sharing their experience and skills are perfect examples of the efforts towards creating sustainable solutions for aid on the spot in the places that need it the most.

Numerous humanitarian activities aimed at other urgent needs of people in need, such as emergency accommodation, access to food and drinking water and renewal and repair of homes and basic infrastructure follow up on the MEDEVAC Programme. We also strive to combine this with economic diplomacy. Czech medical knowhow and Czech medical supplies and pharmaceuticals presentation open the door for Czech firms in the healthcare sector.

The fifteen hundred patients treated or operated under the MEDEVAC Programme in 2016 is a drop in the ocean of the conflicts and catastrophes around the world. However, each number represents a specific person's life saved, a specific family helped and a specific local hospital supported. Our sincere wish is that, thanks to fast response to conflicts and catastrophes and their prevention in future years, the number of people that need our help around the world would fall. At the same time, let us be ready to continue to help where necessary. It still applies not just between people, but also between states, that in providing effective help to others, we are also helping ourselves.



"The MEDEVAC Programme is not just proof of the capabilities of various sectors of state administration, but primarily it is a calling card demonstrating the high level of professional knowhow and skills and, often too, self-sacrifice and courage of Czech doctors and other medical professionals."

The Patients of the MEDEVAC Programme



Chandra, 47 years old

Chandra lives with her family in a poor area in the Jordan River Valley. For many years she suffered pain in her hip joint, 5 years living just in her bedroom and the vicinity, she could not almost move without help. Her husband had to carry her on his back to a hospital 2km away for examinations, where she only received medicines for soothing the pain. A hip operation in Jordan costs several hundred times more than the monthly income of the whole family. As a result of an appointment with a Jordanian doctor, a long-term collaborator of the MEDEVAC Programme, after an examination she was placed on a waiting list of patients recommended for operation by the Czech orthopaedic team. The operation was a success and Chandra can walk again, free of pain.

Fatima, 16 years old

Fatima has been living with her family in Jordan for four years now. Their house in Syria was destroyed during bombardment that came early one morning, while everyone was still asleep. Fatima remained under the ruins of the burning house. She was saved, but has extensive burns on her face and neck that could not be treated in Syria and her state of health did not improve after the basic course of treatment she received. The whole family therefore decided to leave for Jordan, where however healthcare is very expensive. Czech doctors corrected several scars which, due to the way they were healing, had begun painfully pulling on the skin of her neck.



Sham, 5 years old

Sham comes from the Syrian city of Homs and she left for Jordan with her family four years ago after their house had been bombed. The journey took them three days and three nights. Sham burned herself with a pot of hot tea while alarmed by the bombing. The scars that remained on her neck and chest had to be operated on again due to growing up. Before they left Syria, her father was in the last year of study of economics and ran his own shop. He does not speak with any hope of the future. Nobody has any idea what is going to happen. But the family is safe and that is what is important.



Hamza, 8 years old

Hamza lives with his family in a Zaatari camp near the Syrian border for four years. When bombing began in the city of Daraa, they fled across the Jordanian border straight to the camp. The family lives in a single housing module measuring 16 m². Eight-year-old Hamza had cerebral palsy and could not walk at all. He had several operations, but only after the procedures performed by Czech doctors was he able to stand again on his feet. He would like to become a doctor himself one day. In 2015 he was operated by Professor Jiří Chomiak from Na Bulovce Hospital: *"He had a spastic form of cerebral palsy, with prevailing disablement of the lower limbs which led to muscular contractures – shortening of the muscles and tendons in the legs – in the area of the hip and knee and foot. The hips were crossed over each other and bent, the knees were bent and impossible to straighten, the feet were permanently bent downwards, so he could only stand on tiptoes. His overall condition made it impossible to stand and manage to walk, and even caused difficulties when sitting. During one operation we extended the boy's tendons and muscles in the area of the hips, knees and feet, achieving relaxation of his posture and even useful movement. The rest of the boy's treatment was conducted while he was wearing a plaster cast on his legs in the shape of letter A and now he uses plastic orthoses which prevent repeated incidence of contractures. In time, after gaining muscular strength through exercise, he may be able to walk without the orthoses and maybe even without crutches, because he is in good mental health and the centres in the brain that control movement work satisfactorily."*

Sanaa, 38 years old

"Our life in the south of Syria in the city of Daraa was peaceful. My husband used to sell food while I was bringing up the children. At the beginning of 2012 the situation was becoming dangerous. The army began dropping bombs from planes wherever anything moved. Every time I heard a plane we ran to the cellar of the local mosque. One day we were in front of the house when suddenly an air raid began. A bomb fell really close to us. Everything shook and I thought I was dead. We were all lying there on the ground, an unbelievable whistling in our ears. I thought I'd gone deaf. Dust everywhere. Covered in blood, I got up and started to look for my children. I saw my neighbour holding her son's body. He was missing limbs. I began to find my children who were covered in blood and dust. Some had shrapnel in their bodies. Together with my husband we found five children. The sixth was dead. I was in my

eighth month of pregnancy, but I managed to carry the child the full term.

After this event, government troops began raiding the area. My husband disappeared and to this day I don't know what's become of him. I decided to leave Syria. When I crossed the border, Jordanian soldiers took me to a refugee camp and I stayed there with my children for ten months. We lived in a tent and used to receive basic foods from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Life in the refugee camp became unbearable because there were terribly many people there and no access to care. I decided to leave the camp and went to live with my uncle in Amman. He threw us out two months later and I ended up in the street with my children. We were starving. My elder children didn't go to school, because they had to find a job – they sold coffee in the street. With the help of non-profit organisations, I found a flat.



My son Mohammed had a deformed thumb and couldn't work. He couldn't write his homework, couldn't work, children made fun of him. I sold my valuables to be able to afford basic treatment at the doctor's. Mohammed needed an operation for his condition to improve. A friend of mine told me that Czech doctors travel to Jordan and operate for free. I made a phone call and the operation was a success. Mohammed can use his hands properly now. He can write his homework and work. The children at school don't make fun of him anymore."

Valerii, 43 years old

Valerii comes from the Luhansk region in eastern Ukraine. In 2007 a cancerous tumour was detected in his brain and he underwent several unsuccessful operations. In June 2014, under the threat of attack he and his whole family were forced to flee his home town in a single day, along with many other people. There was a traffic jam and chaos on the roads. A week after their escape, bombardment began in Luhansk. Valerii went to Kharkov where his wife, Nataliya, after some time managed to find a job as a nurse. Valerii and his family are registered as internally displaced persons and receive support from the state. Unfortunately this is not enough to cover their ordinary monthly expenses. Nataliya has to look after their six-member family by herself

because Valerii's state of health does not allow him to go to work. Through a doctor who cooperates with the MEDEVAC Programme in Ukraine, Valerii was enrolled in the Programme. After consulting his state of health with the head of the neurosurgical and neurooncologi-



cal clinic of the Central Military Hospital in Střešovice, it was decided to fly him to the Czech Republic for an operation. Social assistance was arranged through Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague and Valerii underwent a successful operation. Screening results six months later are negative. His wife Nataliya adds: "We waited 9 months for the operation and I was over the moon when they phoned to tell us that my husband had been enrolled in the MEDEVAC Programme. Treatment in the Czech Republic was our last hope. It's a great relief that the operation went well. I was pleasantly surprised by the professional and accommodating approach of the Czech doctors and the other healthcare personnel. It's different in Ukraine – I know that from personal experience."

Ibrahim, 2 years old

Ibrahim is a Syrian refugee living on the outskirts of Amman. He appears in the photo with his father, Hamza, the family has been living in Jordan for 4 years. The father works as a guard in an olive processing factory. His "salary" is free accommodation in a garage next to the factory. Their flat in Hama has been destroyed, so they have nowhere to return to. Ibrahim was just 3 months old when they made an appointment for vaccination. During the examination it was found that Ibrahim suffers from congenital abnormality of the heart, his skin was rather blue and he was finding it difficult to breathe. According to his prognosis, Ibrahim had only a few months of life left ahead of him. His father heard from his relatives that Czech teams travel regularly to Jordan to treat Syrian refugees. He found out about the MEDEVAC Programme and its cooperation with the Al Khalidi Medical Center, and about their child cardio programme. Unfortunately, at the time the Czech team had no trip planned so, in close cooperation with the Al Khalidi Medical Center and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the MEDEVAC Programme arranged for a complex operation to be performed by Jordanian specialists under the supervision of doctors from the Motol University Hospital Children's Heart Centre.



Doctors and Nurses in the MEDEVAC Programme

Jindřich Plesník, M.D.
Eye Department of Bulovka Hospital

1) Why did you decide to sign up for a MEDEVAC Programme mission?

I had the opportunity to help Syrian refugees, the local population and also to have a glimpse of Jordan and its culture.

2) What does the MEDEVAC Programme mean for you?

Help where it is most needed.

Dana Kafková
Head Scrub Nurse
Orthopaedic Clinic
Bulovka Hospital

1) Why did you decide to sign up for a MEDEVAC Programme mission?

To represent Na Bulovce Hospital and the Czech Republic abroad and to help refugees.

2) What does the MEDEVAC Programme mean for you?

To improve the quality of life for the population in places where access to medical care is exceedingly difficult.



Petra Nováková, M.A.
Chief Physiotherapist
Clinic of Rehabilitation Medicine
General University Hospital and 1st Faculty
of Medicine, Charles University in Prague

1) Why did you decide to sign up for a MEDEVAC Programme mission?

I had been following the work of various humanitarian programmes and organisations for some time. In past years I had had the opportunity to cooperate on the treatment of Libyan, Syrian and Ukrainian patients at the General University Hospital. Going on a mission was another chance to learn more about the programmes in practice and to help wounded and sick people from areas stricken by military conflict.

2) What does the MEDEVAC Programme mean for you?

For me MEDEVAC means a functioning programme that provides also subsequent post-operative care. Thanks to MEDEVAC, I can apply my skills and experience and try at least partially to improve the quality of life for people in difficult living conditions following an injury or operation and for whom rehabilitation is not normally part of the treatment.



Lucie Laciaková, B.A.
Intensive Care Unit Nurse
Children's Heart Centre
Motol University Hospital

1) Why did you decide to sign up for a MEDEVAC Programme mission?

For me participation on a humanitarian mission means both a great honour and responsibility. We try to achieve equally good results from our operative procedures as we do at home, for which quality post-operative care is vital and which mainly depends on the skills and knowledge of the nursing staff. As a non-medical healthcare professional – an intensive care unit nurse, I always try to ensure with the “local team” that post-operative care is provided as precisely and with the same standard as in the Czech Republic which, if I might say, we do.

Joining the MEDEVAC Programme was an opportunity for me to try working elsewhere than in our “comfortable” conditions, to find out if I am able to work under greater pressure, in a new environment often being forced to improvise and with a language barrier.

2) What does the MEDEVAC Programme mean for you?

For me the MEDEVAC Programme means the opportunity to share my experience and new procedures with colleagues in countries where the field of paediatric cardiosurgery is not as advanced as in the Czech Republic, or is still literally “in its infancy”. The chance to pass on and also to learn information and good practices is of the highest professional value to me. Paediatric cardiosurgery nursing care is an extremely specialised job that requires guidance and constant education which we always strive to provide to the local team.

MEDEVAC for me means synergetic cooperation between the “home” and the “away team” where the “players” are not interested in the number of goals, but in quality time spend on the “pitch”.

Václav Vaněček, M.D., Ph.D.
Deputy Chief
Department of Orthopaedic Trauma
of 1st Faculty of Medicine and
Military University Hospital Prague

1) Why did you decide to sign up for a MEDEVAC Programme mission?

I feel a close affinity with the MEDEVAC Programme because I had the chance to participate on two military missions in Afghanistan and so I can say that working in a different cultural environment than is standard in the Czech Republic is a very interesting and enriching experience. I got the chance to contribute to the setting up of an orthopaedic/trauma operating team, I was involved in selecting the patients whose quality of life we helped to improve with our treatment. It was also incredibly interesting to work at the local, excellently equipped hospital with the local specialists. Personally, I think that the MEDEVAC mission as it is conceived involves many different aspects of helping people who most



likely would not normally receive such standard of care in their home country. I will not deny that sometimes communication proved rather complicated, but that is also part of this form of assistance. Fairly lengthy preparations precede each mission, whether it is the already mentioned selection of patients, the time schedule, the economic aspect of supplies of materials for operations, logistic considerations and so on.

This all represents a great challenge for me and a certain amount of adrenalin, which I need for my work and this change to my ordinary day-to-day job helps me maintain a healthy detachment.

2) What does the MEDEVAC Programme mean for you?

I have probably partially answered this question in the first part. Often, everyday work at the hospital is stressful and any distraction from day-to-day reality is welcome and as far as MEDEVAC is concerned, it encompasses everything I would expect from a humanitarian project. Working with specialists who are the best in their field and, most importantly, helping others whose gratitude is so genuine is extremely satisfying for a doctor. I would say that in view of the long-term nature of the project, it is managing to achieve its goals and I am glad that I can be of help in this and I hope that in coming years I will have the opportunity to participate on a project with the team from the Central Military Hospital Prague.



Libor Hejsek, M.D., Ph.D., FEBO
Eye Clinic of Hradec Králové
University Hospital

1) Why did you decide to sign up for a MEDEVAC Programme mission?

The main impulse for my decision was my boss's wishes. I couldn't let Professor Jirásková go alone either as a woman or as an ophthalmologist / surgeon. Another point in favour was curiosity, the chance to gain new surgical experience and also because it was in a way a challenge.

2) What does the MEDEVAC Programme mean for you?

I don't connect the concept of MEDEVAC with the word programme. I can see only its practical side and impact. From the point of view of an eye surgeon, our work seems to be effective. We treat a large number of patients with cataracts whose quality of life we are able to improve quickly and relatively safely by improving eyesight or sometimes returning lost sight to our patients. Efficacy also lies in the price of the operation. I gained the impression that another reason why Czech eye doctors travel to Jordan is often because a Jordanian ophthalmologist would never do the operation for such a small amount of money (MEDEVAC treatment is free for the patient). Despite that I am always happy to return home and operate on our own patients who need our care exactly the same as people in any other corner of the earth.

Petr Špiroch, M.D., Ph.D.
Head Trauma Outpatient Clinic
Olomouc University Hospital



1) Why did you decide to sign up for a MEDEVAC Programme mission?

Ever since I began to work in accident and emergency medicine, which is 15 years now, I wanted to participate in a humanitarian mission in a country with limited access to healthcare. This was possible with Doctors Without Borders, but at first I didn't have enough experience for me to be of any help, and later I didn't have enough time to go on the 6-8 week mission and probably also the courage to go to a conflict zone where that organisation most often operates. Therefore, when the opportunity arose of a humanitarian mission under the MEDEVAC Programme which operates in relatively safe countries for a period of about 2 weeks, after getting the consent of my family I decided to take part in the MEDEVAC project in 2015. As part of the Olomouc University Hospital team I took part in three missions in Jordan and one in northern Iraq.

2) What does the MEDEVAC Programme mean for you?

For me, the MEDEVAC Programme means helping people with no or limited access to healthcare when the procedures we perform, which no one would normally provide them in the country where they live, fundamentally improve their quality of life.

The MEDEVAC Programme through the eyes of a Jordanian doctor

Watheq Al-Qsous, M.D.
Czech-Jordanian doctor



“Thanks to MEDEVAC I have begun to work with a third, very populous group of people – refugees, who have neither insurance nor the funds for treatment and so seek help from dubious shamans at the peripheries or scrape together money for treatment often without result. And it is these people who are the target group of MEDEVAC. To help people who really need it, but otherwise cannot afford it gives me profound satisfaction as a doctor.”

It is a well-known fact that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has recently been faced with an acute refugee crisis. The number of inhabitants of Jordan has risen by more than a million people over a very short period of time, causing great complications for the entire local system, not just healthcare. That is why it is of utmost importance to have the knowledge that the individual states are not turning their backs on us and are trying to help.

It is admirable that, despite not being one of the world’s economic superpowers, the Czech Republic donates to Jordan so significantly, whether in the form of direct financial aid, projects in refugee camps financed by the Czech government or the MEDEVAC humanitarian programme which I was able to become part of.

I can confirm with no hesitation that according to the method of its implementation it is clear that the people behind MEDEVAC, truly want to help. Proof of this is the development of MEDEVAC which started as transfer of patients to the Czech Republic involving dozens of refugees which, in view of the costs of the journey and long-term patient rehabilitation, proved to be unviable. Since Czech doctors began operating in Jordan itself, the number of patients whose lives

have been saved or whose quality of life has dramatically improved by the operations performed by Czech teams can be counted by the hundreds.

As a doctor operating in Jordan, I work with two groups of patient: the first is made up of those whose basic medical care in state hospitals is covered by the insurance company. The second group comprises of those who can pay for above-standard medical care in the private sector from their own funds. But thanks to MEDEVAC I have begun to work with a third, very populous group of people – refugees, who have

neither insurance nor the funds for treatment and so seek help from dubious shamans at the peripheries or scrape together money for treatment often without result. And it is these people who are the target group of MEDEVAC. To help people who really need it, but otherwise cannot afford it, gives me profound satisfaction as a doctor.

It would be impossible to list all of the successes of the Czech teams, because each operated patient who left the hospital with gratitude, every parent whose child received help would not call their work a success, but a miracle. Someone helped them, the poorest of the poor, without a holding out their hand for money, without expecting payment.

For me MEDEVAC does not just mean working with excellent teams of Czech specialists, but also inner realisation of my medical vocation, because with MEDEVAC it is not a case of work but real calling. I would like to express my admiration not only for those who are “on stage” – the doctors and nurses who leave their families and their own patients behind to simply help others, but primarily those who stand behind the scenes of all of the successful missions, whether be it the team from Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic or Czech embassy representatives in Jordan, notably the Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Jordan, Petr Hladík. As a Jordanian, I would like to express my gratitude that the Czech government as the only one provides help where it is needed – not just to refugees, but also to the neediest Jordanians.



Specialist internships for foreign doctors and nurses under the MEDEVAC Programme

Ahmed Salah Mahdi, M.D. (32 years old)

Doctor in the field of general surgery, works at the Emergency Teaching Hospital in Duhok, Iraq – the Kurdistan Region.

"During training we had the opportunity to experience a simulation of a tragic event – a gas explosion. We face such type of situation often in Kurdistan, there is a constant threat of terrorist attack. Thanks to the combination of practical training and theory lessons we could see what mistakes we were making, what our strong and weak sides are, and how to do things better. For us it was a really powerful experience."



General University Hospital/2016/traumatology, orthopaedics/
Kurdish doctors and nurses internship/Czech Republic

Hind Sabah Azeez, M.D. (32 years old)

Eye doctor, works at Duhok Eye Hospital in Iraq – Kurdistan Region.

"The most interesting aspect for us was to see the systematic organisation of work at the clinic, primarily due to a high level of specialisation and the planning system. In our country, almost everyone does everything. Another visible difference was the standard of the equipment available here."

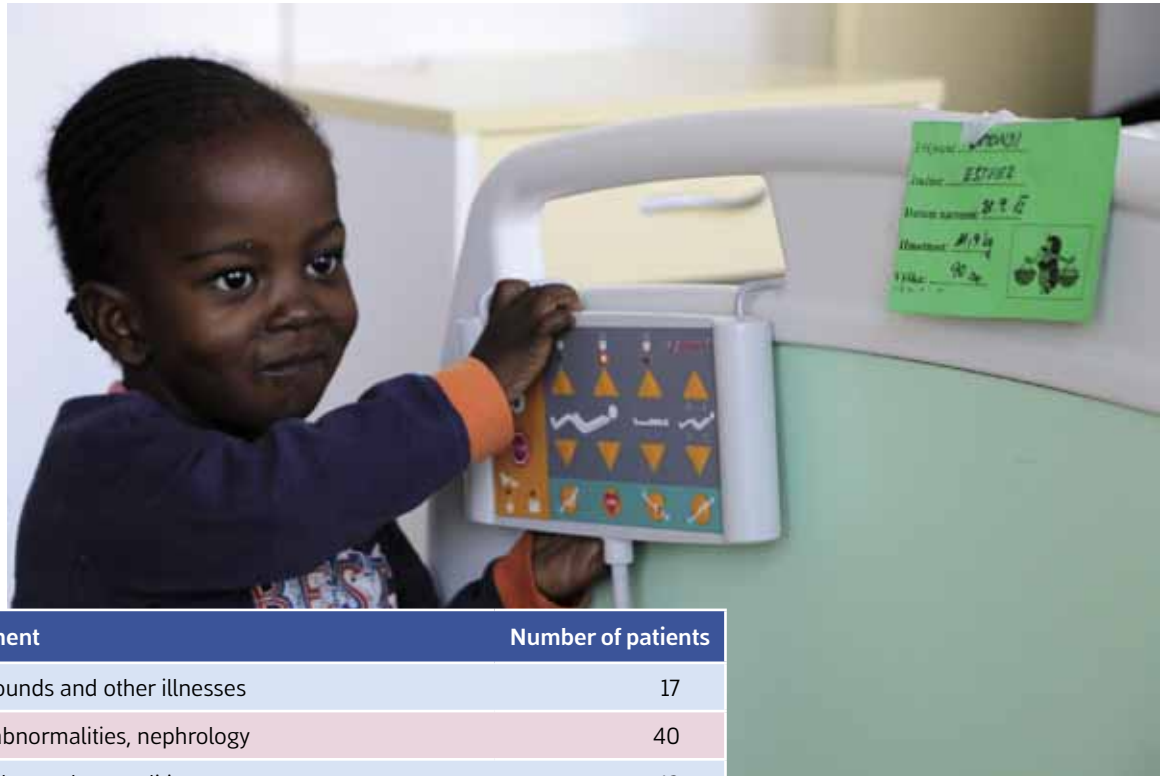


Nawrooz Najmadeen Saeed, M.D. (34 years old)

Doctor in the field of general surgery, works at the Emergency Teaching Hospital in Duhok, Iraq – the Kurdistan Region.

"I think my decision to become a doctor was right. It is good to know that I have the skills to be able to help others. In my country it is no problem for a woman to become a doctor, but it is hard work, especially in surgical fields. Sometimes I find it difficult, encountering death almost every day... I work at the Emergency Hospital where every day they bring patients from the front, both civilians and Peshmerga, our soldiers who protect us. One doesn't want to see that sort of thing. But I always tell myself that tomorrow will be better... I would like to thank you for the chance of participating in this training; I am delighted that someone in the Czech Republic is thinking about how to help people in my country where life isn't easy and where a war is going on. This type of help, training and sharing skills and experience with our doctors and nurses seems to me a very good idea."

Medical humanitarian evacuation to the Czech Republic for treatment



Year	Patient's country of origin	Treatment	Number of patients
1993–1994	Bosnia and Herzegovina	war wounds and other illnesses	17
1998	Kosovo	heart abnormalities, nephrology	40
2003–2005	Iraq	burns, heart abnormalities	42
2005	Chechnya	neurology	1
2006	Pakistan	fractures, cleft palates, heart abnormalities, hypospadias	10
2008–2010	Afghanistan	heart abnormalities, burns, orthopaedics	14
2009–2011	Cambodia	heart abnormalities	10
2011–2012	Libya	heart abnormalities, war wounds	20
2012	Burma	heart abnormalities	3
2012–2013	Syria	heart abnormalities, war wounds	14
2014	Ukraine	war wounds	39
2015	Ukraine	war wounds	10
2016	Kenya	heart abnormalities	3
2016	Ukraine	orthopaedics, neurosurgery	2
Total			225

Financial Donations



IRAQ

Support in developing / building healthcare infrastructure for internally displaced persons at the Hasansham 12 IDP Camp not far from Mosul, Iraq. Purchase of medical supplies, instruments and portable x-ray.

EUR 92,600



UKRAINE

Provision of medical equipment to hospitals in eastern Ukraine (Avdiika, Svitlodarsk, Volnovaha).

EUR 74,000



LEBANON

Equipment and medical supplies for primary medical centres in the Beqaa region.

EUR 92,600



IRAQ

Distribution of drinking water and hygiene packages for internally displaced persons nearby to Mosul in Iraq.

EUR 92,600



UKRAINE

Equipment and medical supplies for hospitals in eastern Ukraine (Volnovaha).

EUR 74,000

The MEDEVAC Programme through the eyes of its founder

PhDr. Tomáš Haišman
former Director of the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic

The impulse for the birth of the MEDEVAC Programme in the Czech Republic was a tragic event. In 1993, five-year-old Irma Hadžimuratović was severely wounded by a grenade that exploded in a Sarajevo market place. After complicated negotiation, she was eventually transferred to London for another operation; however, despite all the efforts of the British doctors, she died. This act by Britain stood back then as a symbol that the Czech Republic followed. The fight to save the life of a young girl opened the way for help of hundreds of other wounded people. That is how the MEDEVAC Programme was born.

From the start, MEDEVAC directed its help primarily on child patients injured due to armed conflicts or natural disasters. Whether these were children from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan or other crisis areas, patient selection took place in close cooperation with Czech doctors, especially from Motol University Hospital or from the Czech field hospitals operating in Iraq or Afghanistan. The children that were selected had such a type of injury or illness that their life would be saved or their quality of life would significantly improve by an operation or treatment. This is the talent of Czech paediatric cardiosurgery, orthopaedics or plastic and reconstruction surgery.

As of 2011, MEDEVAC began to turn its focus also on adult patients, especially those with war wounds. The largest mass evacuation of patients took place after the events on Kiev's Maidan Square in 2014 when, in cooperation with the Czech Army, a total of 39 seriously wounded civilians were brought to Czech hospitals. We managed to react very quickly and the patients were transferred to the Czech Republic within only few days.

Currently MEDEVAC has changed its form. In addition to medical humanitarian evacuations, the Pro-

gramme concentrates also on sending Czech medical teams on missions abroad and training foreign medical staff in the Czech Republic and in their home countries. The help given by Czech doctors is aimed in particular at countries in which or its immediate vicinity armed conflicts are underway and the governments of these countries must solve the plight of thousands of people who have fled their homes. By provision of specialist medical care or financial donations for equipping healthcare facilities, MEDEVAC helps those who really need it and thus helps spreading the good name of the Czech Republic and Czech healthcare abroad.

The MEDEVAC Programme is known in many countries thanks to the professional approach and level of specialisation of the Czech medical teams. Alongside humanitarian aid, MEDEVAC provides help in countries where specialised healthcare is not sufficiently developed. Czech doctors travel here not only for operations of several dozens of patients, but also to introduce modern procedures and best practices of Western medicine into the local healthcare system and to the local doctors and nurses.

A great number of people have cooperated on the MEDEVAC Programme since the beginning. During its existence, more than a hundred medics, doctors and nurses have been involved in MEDEVAC. They deserve great thanks. During operations aboard it is sometimes necessary to improvise, adapt to the rhythm of the lo-



cal hospitals, lacking equipment or hygienic conditions. The doctors and nurses who go on these missions see such problems as a challenge but even in complicated conditions they do their best to do a great job.

In addition to the doctors, the whole programme is managed by numerous administrators, coordinators from Czech hospitals, embassies and ministries. Without them, the MEDEVAC Programme could not function.

"I am extremely glad that we have managed to keep the MEDEVAC Programme alive for a whole 24 years. It is a project which elevates the spirit of all of those who participate in it. I am delighted to be able to be part of it."

Hospitals which contributed towards implementation of MEDEVAC in 2016:



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