

MSF on shaky ground in Myanmar after suspension order

By Ashlee Betteridge
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The Myanmar government has backflipped following [reports on Friday](#) that it was kicking well-respected NGO Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) out of the country, saying that it had [only temporarily suspended](#) its activities.

Two days after the initial suspension, the organisation was allowed to reopen its clinics in the capital Yangon, as well as in Kachin and Shan states.

Operations in troubled Rakhine state remain on hold.

In a [statement](#), MSF said it “remains extremely concerned about the fate of tens of thousands of vulnerable people in Rakhine state who currently face a humanitarian medical crisis”. The US has also [criticised](#) the suspension.

The suspension was provoked by allegations that MSF was biased in favour of the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine state. The Rohingya have been the target of violence from the country’s Buddhist majority and many have been displaced and are living in camps with limited access to healthcare.

The BBC’s correspondent in Myanmar, Jonah Fisher, says the case highlights the difficulties faced by humanitarian organisations working in Rakhine.

“Aid agencies in Rakhine state face a difficult choice. Keep quiet in a situation some have described as close to apartheid or speak out and risk infuriating the Buddhist majority,” he [wrote](#).

About the author/s

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Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now has her own consultancy, Better Things Consulting, and works across several large projects with managing contractors.

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