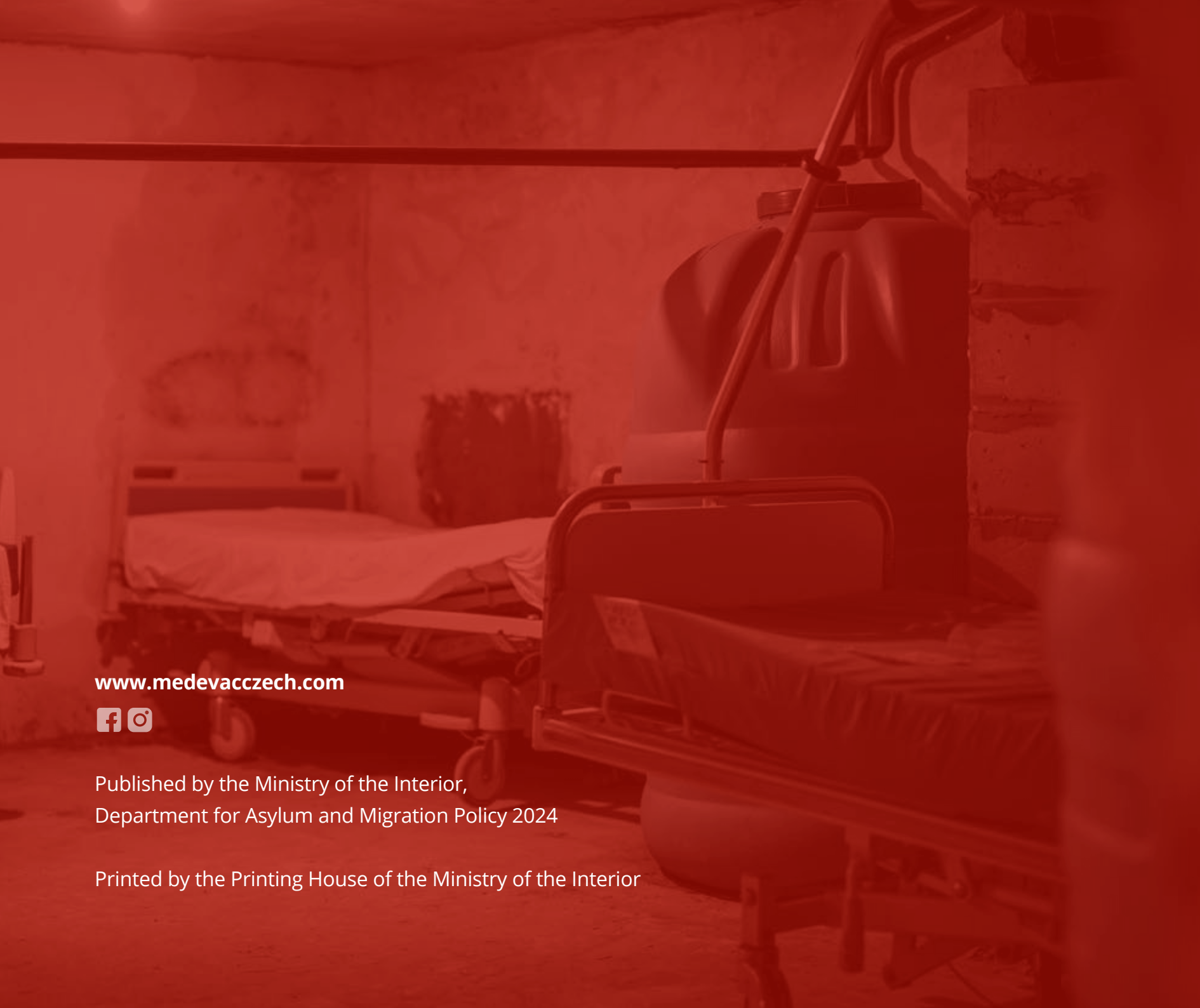


Annual report 2023



MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

MECEVAC



www.medevacczech.com



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Dear readers,

The civility of an individual is manifested in solidarity and willingness to help someone else according to one's own possibilities and abilities, particularly if that someone else faces a disability or other difficulties. The measure of civility of a country and its inhabitants is adherence to these principles in a broader societal context. It is not easy to change the opinions of those who think that we should not take interest in events beyond our borders; however, the globalised world of today is so interconnected that armed conflicts and other crises in distant areas have a nearly immediate impact on the situation in our own country, too.

On the following pages, please, allow me to present to you two foreign programmes of the Ministry of the Interior – MEDEVAC and Aid in Place – which, with their actions, support third countries in addressing the causes of migration, forced displacement, crisis management and provision of specialised medical care. I am happy that the activities of both programmes constantly adapt to the current needs and are growing. This past year, the MEDEVAC Programme expanded its operation to two new countries, Rwanda and Zambia, opening up new possibilities of humanitarian and medical assistance. At the same time, we have also newly established cooperation with three new Czech hospitals, which will enable us to provide an even larger portfolio of medical care. The Aid in Place Programme also supported implementation of projects in new countries, specifically in Armenia and Tunisia, which found themselves in a difficult migration situation in 2023.

The activities of both Programmes in Ukraine deserve special attention. In August 2023, the historically first mission of the MEDEVAC Programme with Czech physicians took place directly in Ukraine, specifically in the city of Lviv. As a result of the Russian aggression, there is an urgent need of increased medical care and demanding

surgical procedures and plastic surgical treatments in this country due to the injuries caused by the war conflict. The second mission took place soon after in November the same year and we are immensely happy that we can help Ukrainian citizens directly on site in these difficult times.

As part of the Aid in Place Programme, we focused on helping the displaced residents in their difficult situation in Ukraine in 2023. For example, one project that is certainly worth mentioning is the project focused on humanitarian demining, which allows the inhabitants of liberated areas to return to their homes.

I would hereby like to express my sincere gratitude to all those involved for their extraordinary effort and dedication in carrying out their work. Particularly to the physicians involved in the MEDEVAC Programme who not only fulfil the Hippocratic Oath but also support the essential and increasingly important motto of the civilised world: "If you save one person's life, it is as if you have saved the whole world." However, the efforts of both Programmes not only save human lives but also bring the hope of a better life to the destination countries to those who were not as fortunate as most of us.

Mgr. Pavla Novotná,

Director of the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy





About the MEDEVAC Programme

The goal of the government MEDEVAC Programme is to provide medical care for the vulnerable segment of population in source and transit countries of migration or in areas where specialised medical care is unavailable. The Programme has been implemented since 1993 and is coordinated by the Czech Republic's Ministry of the Interior.

The goals of the Programme are accomplished through four activities:

- **deployment of medical teams abroad**
 - **professional traineeships for and training of foreign medical personnel**
 - **medical humanitarian evacuation of patients to the Czech Republic**
 - **supporting projects designed to build healthcare infrastructure**
-

Implementation of the MEDEVAC Programme in 2023

19 medical missions abroad (Ghana, Jordan, Lebanon, Rwanda, Senegal, Ukraine, Zambia)

1040 surgical procedures performed abroad on **940** patients

6 reconnaissance missions abroad carried out to expand the MEDEVAC Programme in the currently included countries (Ghana, Iraq, Senegal, Jordan, Ukraine)

173 persons received training during **13** professional traineeships for healthcare professionals in the Czech Republic and **7** trainings abroad

2 projects for building healthcare infrastructure in Ukraine, **1** in-kind donation to Türkiye as emergency assistance after an earthquake and **4** in-kind donations to Ukraine

12 involved Czech hospitals (Centre of Cardiovascular and Transplant Surgery, Thomayer University Hospital, Brno University Hospital, Bulovka University Hospital, Hradec Králové University Hospital, Královské Vinohrady University Hospital, Olomouc University Hospital, Motol University Hospital, Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine (ICEM), Na Homolce Hospital, Military University Hospital Prague (ÚVN), General University Hospital in Prague (VFN)) and the Army of the Czech Republic

Activities of the MEDEVAC Programme in 2023



Deployment of Czech medical teams abroad



Professional traineeships and trainings of foreign medical personnel in the Czech Republic or abroad



Reconnaissance



In-kind donation



February 2023

Türkiye

**Královské Vinohrady
University Hospital**



18-26/02/2023

Ghana/CR

Královské Vinohrady UH
plastic surgery



04-12/03/2023

Rwanda/CR

Královské Vinohrady UH
plastic surgery



08-16/04/2023

Zambia/CR

Motol University Hospital
ENT



15-23/04/2023

Ghana/CR

ICEM, Motol UH
infectology



24/04 – 06/05/2023

Senegal

Army of the CR
anaesthesiology,
work with instruments



24-28/04/2023

Iraq

Brno UH, Bulovka UH
anaesthesiology,
gynaecology,
burn medicine



23/04 – 05/05/2023

Lebanon

General University Hospital
ophthalmology



16/04 – 01/05/2023

Zambia/CR

Motol UH
paediatric cardiac surgery



15-29/04/2023

Ghana/CR

Bulovka UH
gynaecology



24/04 – 06/05/2023

Senegal

Army of the CR
traumatology



27/04 – 10/05/2023

Senegal

Bulovka UH
gynaecology



28/04 – 13/05/2023

Zambia

**Olomouc UH, Brno UH,
Královské Vinohrady UH**
traumatology



29/04 – 12/05/2023

Ghana





















Královské Vinohrady UH
plastic surgery



01-05/05/2023

Senegal

**Thomayer University
Hospital**
gynaecology

 03-06/05/2023 Senegal Na Homolce Hospital neurosurgery	 14-20/05/2023 Rwanda Brno UH, Bulovka UH gynaecology	 17/05 – 18/06/2023 Senegal/CR Bulovka UH gynaecology	 22/05 – 02/06/2023 Ghana General University Hospital (VFN) traumatology	 05-15/06/2023 Ghana Bulovka UH gynaecology
 11-13/09/2023 Jordan Brno UH gynaecology	 06-17/09/2023 Zambia Motol UH ENT	 06-15/09/2023 Jordan Královské Vinohrady UH plastic surgery	 31/07 – 12/08/2023 Rwanda Královské Vinohrady UH plastic surgery	 19-27/06/2023 Jordan Military University Hospital Prague ophthalmology
 02/10 – 15/11/2023 Senegal/CR Motol UH ENT	 09-20/10/2023 Rwanda General University Hospital traumatology	 30/10 – 10/11/2023 Ghana Brno UH gynaecology	 05-17/11/2023 Senegal Brno UH traumatology	 08-15/11/2023 Ghana IKEM infectology
 03-17/12/2023 Iraq/CR Bulovka UH gynaecology	 22/11 – 02/12/2023 Senegal Motol UH ENT	 11-24/11/2023 Ghana Olomouc UH, Královské Vinohrady UH traumatology	 12-25/11/2023 Rwanda/CR Bulovka UH gynaecology	 12-18/11/2023 Senegal Bulovka UH gynaecology



Ghana, Cape Coast © Mol CR



Traumatology, VFN, Rwanda, Butare/Huye
© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



Ukraine, Lviv, the Field of Mars © Mol CR (photo by: Dominik Kučera)



Ophthalmology, ÚVN, Jordan, Amman © Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



Plastic surgery, Královské Vinohrady UH,
Ghana, Cape Coast

© MoI CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)

Ghana 2023

251

operated patients

3

traineeships
implemented

11

healthcare
professionals trained

7

medical missions abroad

**Brno UH, Bulovka UH, Královské
Vinohrady UH, VFN, ICEM,
Olomouc UH, Motol UH**

hospitals

**gynaecology, plastic surgery,
traumatology, infectology**

specialisations

“I view the actions of the Czech team in the Cape Coast Teaching Hospital as immensely positive in both human and professional terms. In Ghana, we not only helped to perform surgeries on a large number of patients, but even more importantly, we succeeded in sharing a great deal of practical experience with the newly emerging team of plastic surgeons under the leadership of Dr. Mrs. Ebikela Baidoo.”

prof. MUDr. Andrej Sukop, Ph.D.,
Head of the Clinic of Plastic Surgery,
Královské Vinohrady UH

“We will remain eternally grateful to the MEDEVAC Programme, professor Sukop and his magnificent surgical team for their excellent contribution to development of reconstructive plastic surgery in Cape Coast. Professor Sukop not only played an important role in providing reconstructive plastic surgery to people who otherwise could have never afforded it but he also supported the training of additional professionals through the exchange programme of MEDEVAC who will be providing this necessary medical care to people in Ghana even in his absence. We are looking forward to further successful collaboration in the future.”

Ebikela Ivie Baidoo, M.D.,
Chief Physician of the Clinic of Plastic Surgery,
Cape Coast Teaching Hospital



Reconnaissance, Bulovka UH, Iraq, Najaf © Mol CR

Iraq 2023

1

traineeship implemented

“It is apparent in Iraq that there is a tremendously strong will to change something, to develop, to improve. They do not always have the tools for such an improvement – the huge volume of clinical work does not permit much else than to spend one’s working hours attending to birthing women and patients; they often did not see and experience anything else than their home worksite. The birth rate in the Najaf province is multiple times higher than ours; for example, there is no time left for planned gynaecological care; they are all attending to pregnant and birthing women. It is exactly the opportunity to get to know other worksites, even worksites in Europe, to see different procedures as well as to bring in instructors directly to Najaf that gives the chance to have impact, through MEDEVAC, on the lives of more than two million women in this province in Iraq and a chance for the local residents to tear off the false label of an unsafe or backward place.”

Prof. MUDr. Michal Zikán, Ph.D.

Head of the Gynaecological-Obstetrical Clinic of the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, and Bulovka UH

5

healthcare professionals trained

**Brno UH,
Bulovka UH**

hospitals

1

medical mission abroad

**burns, gynaecology,
anaesthesiology**

specialisations

“I would like to express my deep gratitude to the MEDEVAC Programme. It was an opportunity to get to know outstanding and inspirational people. The exchange of expertise and practical experience with you was a valuable experience and I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have been able to be a part of this successful journey. Although this period has come to an end now, I promise you that this is not goodbye but a pledge to return with further collaboration in the future. Once again, I thank you and I wish you all the best and lots of success in your career.”

Dr Ghassan Hatif Hadi Al-Akayshee,

Managing Director of Al Zahra Hospital Al Najaf



Ophthalmology, ÚVN, Jordan, Amman
© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



Infectology, ICEM, Ghana, Tamale
© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



Ghana, Tamale © Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



Ophthalmology, ÚVN, Jordan, Amman © Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



Ophthalmology, ÚVN? Jordan, Amman

© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)

Jordan 2023

254

operated patients

3

medical missions abroad

“I have been travelling to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with the MEDEVAC Programme since 2022. Here, my team and I focus on cataract (grey cataract) surgeries for the poorest people, often Syrian and Palestinian refugees, but also poor Jordanians who would otherwise be unable to afford this fairly common surgery. A surgical procedure that takes approximately fifteen minutes returns vision to these people who often suffered from nearly complete blindness. This allows them to return to their professional lives. In 2023, my colleague Tesař and I performed a record number of 254 procedures in one week. Besides that, I like to come back to Jordan for its rich Middle Eastern culture, friendly people as well as excellent local dishes.”

doc. MUDr. Martin Šín, Ph.D., FEBO

Head of the Eye Clinic of the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, and the Military University Hospital Prague

**Military University Hospital
Prague, Královské Vinohrady UH**

hospitals

**ophthalmology, plastic surgery,
gynaecology**

specialisations

“We will welcome continuation of this valuable project in Jordan in the forthcoming years in order to achieve further success and help a larger number of patients in need. MEDEVAC has a stellar reputation in Jordan and everyone with whom we collaborate trusts MEDEVAC very much. Over the years, the MEDEVAC Programme provided medical care to nearly 4,000 persons in Jordan and another approximately 1,900 persons are on the waiting list.”

Ibtisam Jaber,

Chief Executive Officer of the
Right Choice Company¹

¹ a non-governmental, non-profit organisation involved in the pre-selection of patients



Ophthalmology, VFN, Lebanon, Beirut

© Mol CR (photo by: Adam Hříbal)

Lebanon 2023

118

operated patients

1

medical mission abroad

“During the mission in Beirut in May, we performed 118 cataract surgeries. The nice weather was in contrast with the bleak economic and political situation in the country. There are now fewer Syrian refugees among our patients and there is a growing number of Lebanese people, for whom medical care has become inaccessible. The mission planned for autumn had to be cancelled due to the current security situation (the breakout of the conflict in the Gaza Strip).”

MUDr. Petr Sklenka,
ophthalmologist,
General University Hospital in Prague

General University Hospital

hospital

ophthalmology

specialisation

“I would like to thank the MEDEVAC Programme, which organised an ophthalmological mission for cataract surgeries in 2023. The mission in the Rafik Hariri University Hospital was led by Mr. Sklenka, M.D., a highly experienced eye care specialist. He and his team helped many disadvantaged patients to have better vision. Our patients very much appreciated the help they received from this mission because it was carried out with a very professional and humanitarian approach. I am looking forward to another mission that will take place in spring and will help additional patients in need.”

Dr. Issam Hamade,
ophthalmologist
Rafik Hariri University Hospital



Traumatology, VFN, Rwanda, Butare/Huye

© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)

Rwanda 2023

42

operated patients

2

implemented traineeships

79

healthcare professionals who received training

“In 2023, the first traumatological mission of physicians from the General University Hospital in Prague to Rwanda took place. Two hospitals were chosen – Military Hospital in the capital city of Kigali and the University Hospital in Huye, and the mission was primarily focused on educating local medical staff. Besides explaining the principles of modern osteosynthesis, we carried out a simulation of a mass-casualty incident in local circumstances with subsequent evaluation of the correct courses of action and shortcomings. In the second part of the mission in the University Hospital in Huye, we joined the surgical programme of local traumatologists.”

Doc. MUDr. Filip Burget, Ph.D.,

Chief Physician of the Department of Trauma Surgery
General University Hospital in Prague

3

medical missions abroad

**Brno UH, Bulovka UH,
Královské Vinohrady UH,
General University Hospital**

hospitals

**gynaecology, plastic surgery,
traumatology**

specialisations

“The partnership between the MEDEVAC Programme and the University Teaching Hospital of Butare is really valuable because it facilitates exchange of knowledge and skills. Thanks to this collaboration, patients receive exceptional care from experts. Together, we strive for excellent results in medical care, mass-casualty incident management, and treatment of patients.”

Christian Ngarambe, M.D.,

General Manager,
University Teaching Hospital of Butare



Gynaecology, Brno UH, Ghana, Tamale
© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



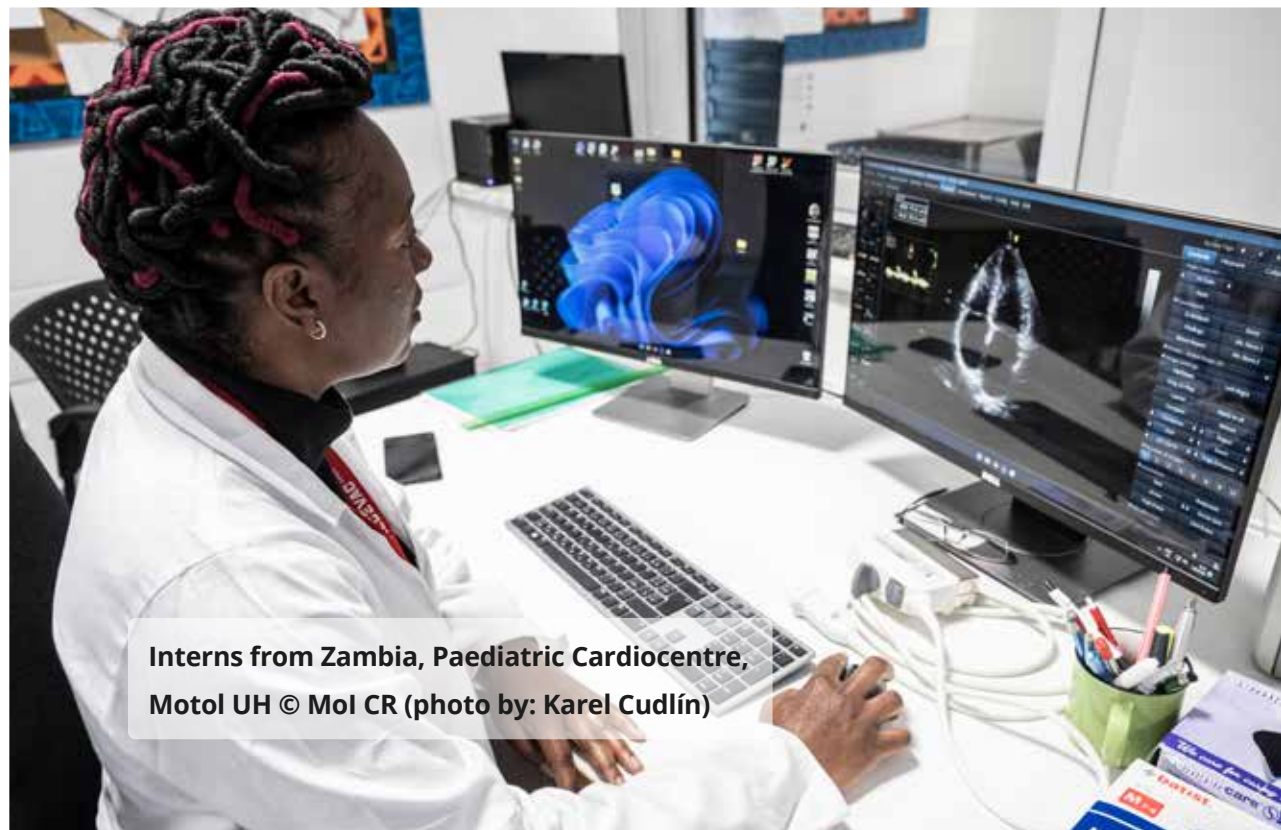
Ophthalmology, VFN, Lebanon,
Beirut © Mol CR



Traumatology,
Brno UH, Senegal, Thies
(photo by: Milan Krtička)



Gynaecology, Brno UH, Ghana, Tamale
© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)



Interns from Zambia, Paediatric Cardiocentre,
Motol UH © Mol CR (photo by: Karel Cudlín)



Interns from Senegal, ENT, Motol University Hospital

© Mol CR (photo by: Jan Mihaliček)

Senegal 2023

217

operated patients

2

implemented traineeships

14

healthcare professionals who received training

“Collaboration between the ENT Dpt. of the Regional Hospital in Thies, Senegal, and the ENT clinics of the Motol UH under the medical humanitarian MEDEVAC Programme has been taking place since 2017. Gradually, the number of patients being operated on more than doubled (80 in 2023). In performance of most procedures, African physicians partially participate under the guidance of Czech specialists. In this way, they receive intensive education to increase their surgical expertise. The significance of these missions undoubtedly goes beyond the area of Thies because they have on other physicians in Senegal as well as other African countries, particularly the French-speaking ones, whose physicians come to Thies for the period of the mission and educate themselves there.”

Prof. MUDr. Jan Plzák, Ph.D.

Head of the ENT and Head and Neck Surgery Clinic at the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, and Motol UH

**Army of the CR, Bulovka UH,
Brno UH, Motol UH, Thomayer
UH, Na Homolce Hospital**

hospitals

**traumatology, gynaecology,
ENT, anaesthesiology**

specialisations

5

medical missions abroad

“During the two months, which I spent doing a traineeship in the Czech Republic, I gained new knowledge that will certainly be useful to me throughout my career. This also allowed me to work side by side with highly qualified medical professionals who were always there for me and generously shared their knowledge. Thank you may be a short phrase, but it means a lot, especially when coming from the heart. I would like to express my sincere thanks to you and to wish you lots of success in the future.”

Dr. Aminata Mbaye

Chief Physician of the ENT Department
of the Thies Regional Hospital



226

operated patients

6

implemented traineeships

3

medical missions abroad

45

healthcare professionals who received training

4

supported projects and in-kind donations

Plastic surgery, Brno UH, Ukraine, Lviv

© Mol CR (photo by: Dominik Kučera)

Ukraine 2023

“The beginning of the entire reconstructive surgery project dates back to 2023. Up until then, we had the opportunity to carry out three missions in several medical facilities in Lviv and the Lviv Region (the Vynyky Hospital). While working there, our Ukrainian colleagues and we jointly created a fully established, functioning and constantly developing platform of collaboration, which leads to enhancing the quality of the provided surgical care and the erudition of Ukrainian physicians. The result was saving the lives and the quality of life of several dozen persons who suffered injuries in connection with the ongoing war conflict.”

prof. MUDr. Břetislav Lipový, Ph.D., MBA, LL.M.,

Clinic of Burn Medicine of the Third Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, and the Královské Vinohrady UH

Centre of Cardiovascular and Transplant Surgery, Brno UH, Královské Vinohrady UH, Hradec Králové UH, Motol UH, General UH

hospitals

anesthesiology, physiotherapy, cardiology, oncology, plastic and reconstructive surgery, burns

specialisations

“Two missions of the MEDEVAC Programme of the Ministry of the Interior of the CR were carried out in Lviv in 2023. A group of Czech physicians, specialists in burns and reconstructive surgery, performed a number of the most complicated procedures and operations on both civil patients and patients injured as a consequence of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. The activities of MEDEVAC and, by extension, of Czech physicians are welcome and highly appreciated in Lviv, for their repeated presence, courage and help provided on site as well as particularly for their expertise. The demanding surgeries and implementations of treatment methods also involve the presence of local physicians with whom our experts share experience and, in a number of procedures, show them the state-of-the-art treatment methods. The MEDEVAC mission is a shining example of tangible help and collaboration on site, with specific results, which help Ukraine and create an excellent reputation for the Czech Republic. The benefit of sharing know-how with Ukrainian physicians is invaluable for the future. MEDEVAC projects will continue in Ukraine in the following years.”

Mgr. David Nový,

General Consul, Lviv



Traumatology, Olomouc UH, Zambia, Mongu

© MoI CR

Zambia 2023

53

operated patients

2

implemented traineeships

2

medical missions abroad

“The first mission of the MEDEVAC Programme to Mongu in Zambia made our team change our approach to the course of the mission and to our activities here. During the other missions in Africa, we were accustomed to performing virtually solely surgical procedures. However, in this case, the local hospital lacked basic organisation of care of the acutely injured and they did not know what to do even about common outpatient care. Therefore, for the most part, our work also covered outpatients. Surgeries had to be carefully considered so that post-surgical care could be handled by the local staff and in the local circumstances.”

MUDr. Petr Špiroch, Ph.D.,

Chief Physician of the Outpatient Department,
Clinic of Traumatology at the Olomouc UH

19

healthcare professionals who received training

**Olomouc UH, Brno UH, Královské
Vinohrady UH, Motol UH**

hospitals

**traumatology, ENT,
paediatric cardiac surgery**

specialisations

“The mission of the MEDEVAC Programme brought us two main benefits: Firstly, it was high-quality services for our patients, which fill in a certain gap because, for the time being, we do not have sufficiently qualified orthopaedic physicians. And secondly, it was the transfer of skills and experience from the Czech specialists. Our local physicians obtained the much needed knowledge of professional practices and procedures. As a result, they are now capable of performing some surgeries fully on their own.”

Bimu Yakilembe, M.D.,

surgeon, Lewanika General Hospital



© Fire Rescue Service



Türkiye 2023

Emergency Assistance

In early February 2023, Türkiye and Syria were hit by a devastating earthquake, which claimed more than 50 thousand human lives, while injuring another dozens of thousands of people. The MEDEVAC Programme responded to specific urgent requests from the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye by providing an in-kind donation. Medical consumables such as bandages, sutures, gloves or surgical instrument kits were purchased. The assistance was provided in coordination with the Královské Vinohrady UH and was delivered to the destination in collaboration with the Fire Rescue Services.

Wherever We Are Most Needed

Exhibition of photographs capturing the activities of the MEDEVAC and Aid in Place Programmes

In January, under the auspices of Interior Minister Vít Rakušan, an exhibition of photographs showing the activities of the MEDEVAC and Aid in Place Programmes was ceremoniously opened. This ceremonial opening was attended, for example, by guests from the collaborating Ministries involved in our Programmes as well as by members of our medical teams and non-governmental organisations.

After a month, the exhibition was relocated from the National Technical Library to the Charles University; thereafter, it was moved to other sites: it was on display in the Motol UH during

April and the first half of May; then, on the occasion of a conference dedicated to disaster medicine, it was possible to see the exhibition at the University of Tomáš Baťa in Zlín, from where it was moved to the Bulovka UH.

The exhibition was loaned to the Brno UH in July and moved to the Olomouc UH in September. Thereafter, the general public was able to see it in the Moritz Gallery based in Olomouc. The exhibition attracted considerable interest from the audience as well as institutions; therefore, in view of this success, we plan to continue the exhibition in the year 2024.





Visit by Interior Minister Vít Rakušan to Africa

At the turn of April and May 2023, Vít Rakušan, the Interior Minister of the Czech Republic, travelled to the three African countries where the MEDEVAC Programme is active: to Senegal, Ghana and Rwanda. During his stay in Senegal, Vít Rakušan visited the MEDEVAC Programme's partner hospital in Thiès, Senegal, where the traumatological mission of physicians from the Army of the CR, the gynaecological mission of the medical team from the Bulovka UH and two training missions under the guidance of the physicians from the Army of the CR were taking place at that very time. Here, Interior Minister Vít Rakušan, together with Mr. Mark Skolil, the Ambassador of the CR in Dakar, handed over a tied financial donation of CZK 10 million to the hospital in Thiès. The physicians specialising in traumatology, gynaecology and ENT from the MEDEVAC expert teams participated in designing the donation and the donation included equipment for these medical specialties. This in-kind donation will significantly contribute to improving the care provided to female and male patients in the Thiès region and its surroundings

and will also help the success of the future missions of Czech physicians in Senegal.

From Senegal, the delegation headed to Ghana where its members visited the Cape Coast Teaching Hospital where the mission of plastic surgeons from the Královské Vinohrady University Hospital had just begun, and the Minister ceremoniously started this mission together with them. Missions in this medical specialty have been carried out in Ghana since last year and our physicians focus primarily on helping adult and paediatric patients with congenital limb defects or patients who suffered severe burn injuries.

The last stop on the delegation's trip was Rwanda, which, after the signing of a memorandum of understanding, has become another partner country of the MEDEVAC Programme with collaboration being planned in the medical specialties of traumatology, gynaecology and plastic surgery. Thus, the activities of MEDEVAC were also an important item on the agenda in Rwanda.



© Mol CR (photo by: Dominik Kučera)

30 Years of the MEDEVAC Programme

The year 2023 was also exceptional in that the MEDEVAC Programme celebrated its 30th birthday. Since its inception in 1993, MEDEVAC underwent substantial evolution due to the necessity to constantly react to new needs and challenges; nevertheless, it has maintained the most important idea throughout the 30 years: to help wherever it is needed. In this part of this year's annual report, we would like to commemorate MEDEVAC's major milestones and successes through interviews with or messages from those who participated in the development of MEDEVAC.

The MEDEVAC Programme was created in 1993 due to the war on the Balkan Peninsula and the efforts of the international community to help the civil population there. The newly formed Czech Republic presented the MEDEVAC Programme as a state-sponsored assistance that could serve as an alternative to international organisations whose attempts at evacuation were facing difficulties. Petr Novák who has been a long-time employee of the Ministry of the Interior reminisces about the first years of MEDEVAC's operation in his interview.

During these first years, the MEDEVAC Programme was implemented in the form of evacuations of injured people

to the Czech Republic (hence the name of the Programme – MEDical EVACuation). Thanks to these evacuations there were 124 persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, Chechnya, Pakistan and Afghanistan operated on during the first 15 years of the existence of the Programme. In addition to war victims, the Programme also focused on victims of natural disasters – and Muhammad Zahid Khan, who reminisces about his trip to the Czech Republic in his letter, was one of the people evacuated because of an earthquake in Pakistan.

Since the very beginning, a large number of people have been involved in MEDEVAC's activities without whom

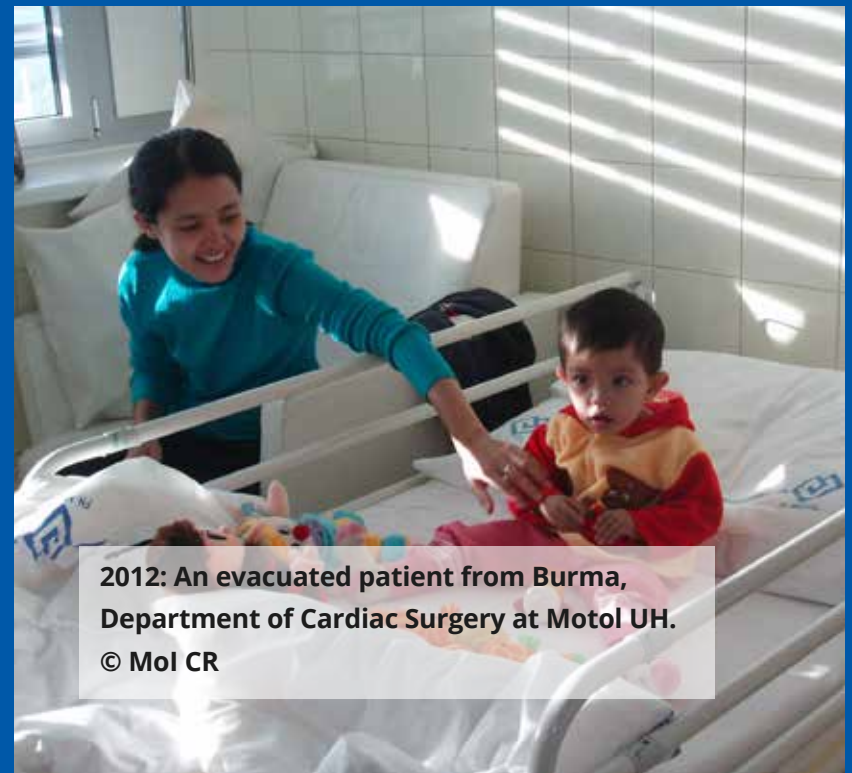
its implementation would not have been possible at all. Besides the involved Ministries, there have also been non-profit organisations involved, including the Archdiocesan Caritas. It was the Archdiocesan Caritas Prague led by its managing director Světlana Porsche that was involved as early as during the first years when this organisation participated in evacuating persons to the Czech Republic and provided important support for the evacuees. You can find an interview with Světlana Porsche on page 46.

The events in Ukraine in 2014 and the refugee crisis in the Middle East in 2015 made MEDEVAC undergo a major transformation. New challenges required new forms of

assistance. Therefore, in addition to evacuations, MEDEVAC focused on actions carried out directly on site. Expanding the range of activities by including medical missions abroad and educational activities, such as training and traineeships, was a fundamental shift in the philosophy of the entire Programme. In addition to direct humanitarian aid, that is, treatment of the sick, MEDEVAC started to be an instrument for building and improving healthcare infrastructure abroad. Humanitarian evacuations of persons injured in clashes during the Ukrainian Maidan protests were followed by trainings and traineeships for personnel working in the field of physical therapy, which aimed to boost this medical specialty in Ukraine so that



1993: The first patient of MEDEVAC from Bosnia, evacuation, Motol UH



**2012: An evacuated patient from Burma, Department of Cardiac Surgery at Motol UH.
© MoI CR**

the injured, and not only the ones transferred to the Czech Republic, would receive high-quality medical care. In Jordan, implementation of MEDEVAC took on a unique form – up to 15 Czech medical teams per year travelled to Jordan to help Syrian refugees in the hospitals there. In his interview, Petr Hladík, Director of the Middle East Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a former Ambassador in Jordan, reminisces about the time when MEDEVAC underwent this important transformation.





319 CJ

2014: Evacuation from Ukraine, traumatology, General UH,
Military University Hospital Prague and Motol UH © MoI CR



Petr Novák

Many-year employee of the Mol's Department
for Asylum and Migration Policy

What comes to your mind when MEDEVAC is mentioned?

I am one of those DAMP employees who experienced the very beginning of the refugee history of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. And this also pertains to the MEDEVAC Programme in the 1990s. Above all, I think of the name Tomáš Haišman, the former director of our department (he passed away in 2018), who was the spiritual father of the MEDEVAC Programme and was there at its start, with his typical grit and stubbornness. At first, paediatric patients were treated in our country, particularly those with heart defects who were treated at the Paediatric Cardiocentre in Motol. The medical team supported this idea from the beginning, and for the experts themselves, this was an opportunity to encounter illnesses, which are not common in our environment. A diagnosis of the tetralogy of Fallot stuck in my memory.

I also think of the Oliva Children's Sanatorium in Říčany u Prahy where patients were receiving follow-up treatment after hospitalisation.

Thanks to MEDEVAC, I was able to see places rarely visited by tourists. At that time, it was Kosovo, nearly still at war, and then especially several visits to the Czech military field hospital in Basra, Iraq. I often recall two images – a child, nearly immobile due to a heart defect, being put in a special government airplane by

their

mother both with trust and concern, and the same child, several weeks later, running out of the airplane into the arms of their mother. And she saw her child running for the first time and the purple colour of the child's skin was completely gone. Even today, I am moved by this scene, by the gratitude expressed to the Czech Republic and Allah and by the kneeling teary-eyed parents on the airfield...

I might add, incidentally, that the weather in Basra was perhaps the hottest one I have ever experienced in my life, and my indelible memories include seeing Cardinal Duka wearing a military helmet and a bulletproof vest...

The MEDEVAC Programme has come a long way, became more professional, increased the number of countries of origin from where patients come, and also dramatically increased the number of treated persons who are by no means just children now. When the Programme started to send medical teams abroad, it was also a breakthrough, which had a twofold effect: Many more patients were helped and both Czech physicians and members of staff and local physicians and nurses gained invaluable experience. I also appreciate our help to injured people from Belarus and Ukraine and the fact that we keep opening new destinations where the Programme is heading.

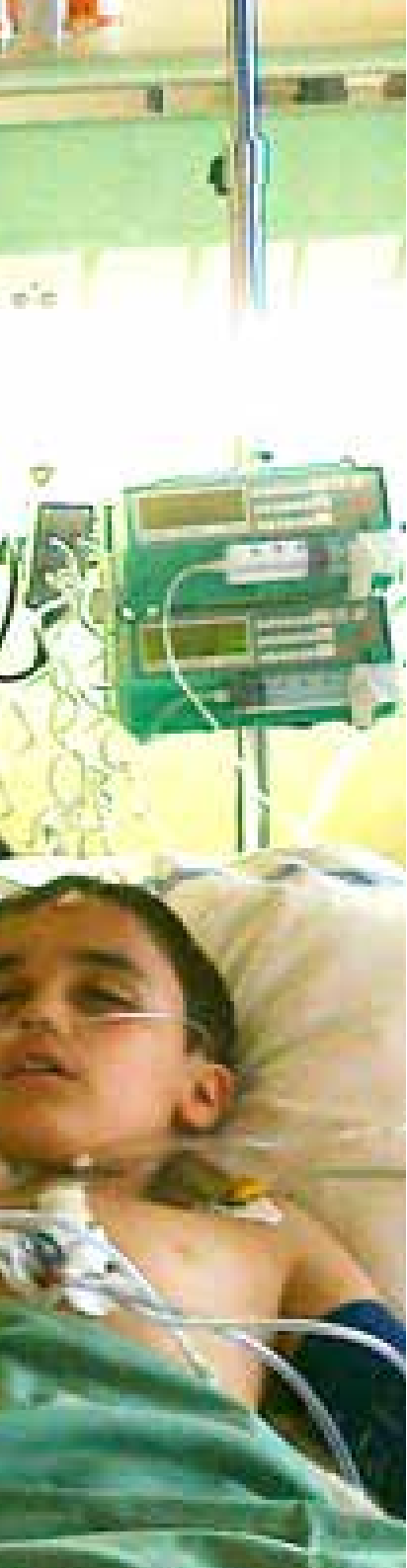
I am happy that I was able to be present at the beginning of this humanitarian flagship of the Mol and that I can see that the Programme is flourishing and expanding. It is just a shame that the large and rich countries of the world do not draw more inspiration from our practices.



2016: Traumatology training, Iraqi Kurdistan,
Olomouc UH © Mol CR



2011: Evacuation from Libya,
paediatric cardiac surgery,
Motol UH © Mol CR



Muhammad Zahid Khan

A patient evacuated from Pakistan after the earthquake in 2005

Dear MEDEVAC team,

I am writing you to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation for an invaluable service, which you provide to people in need all over the world. From the mountains of Kashmir, to the Arabian Desert, from Southeast Europe to Southeast Asia, during all types of crises and emergencies, ranging from natural disasters to wars, the commitment of the Czech Republic and particularly the MEDEVAC Programme to save lives and provide medical care in difficult conditions is really remarkable.

During crises and emergencies, Czech hospitals serve as a beacon of hope for those who were affected by disasters or conflicts. The tireless efforts of your healthcare staff, the Czech government and the Czech army significantly changed the lives of countless individuals and offered them not only the so much needed medical treatment, hospitality and comfort but also hope, assurance and the feeling of safety.

My personal journey started with MEDEVAC in Bagh in 2005, in a town amidst the green Kashmir mountains, where thousands of injured individuals were without hope after a devastating earthquake. MEDEVAC treated hundreds of patients directly in the mobile hospital.

On behalf of the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir, I express my sincere appreciation for your courage and unwavering dedication to the welfare of peoples. Your dedication to humanitarian aid is the example of the best of medical profession, and your efforts undoubtedly left a lasting impact on the lives of many, particularly the 10 families who flew from Kashmir to the Czech Republic for medical treatment.

Once again, I thank you for your remarkable service. Your sympathy and unwavering commitment to provide medical care in difficult conditions make you true heroes. You are an inspiration to us all and we will always remember your work with utmost respect and admiration.

I wish you continued strength, resilience and success in all your future efforts.



Světlana Porsche

Head of the Migration Centre of Archdiocesan Caritas Prague, one of collaborators of the MEDEVAC Programme

What springs to your mind when MEDEVAC is mentioned?

When I hear the word Medevac, I think of faces, names, hospitals, airports, tears of joy and, regrettably, tears of sorrow as well...

I think of the Kbely Airport, a dark evening, airplanes and helicopters, dozens of ambulances, into which my compatriots from Ukraine are being loaded. A number of young people, civilians from the Kyiv Maidan with gunshot wounds who became victims of the brutal suppression of pro-democratic protests in 2014. It seemed to me like the end of the world.

I think of how I once saw a social advertisement while riding in a car,

which said: "We help your children be naughty again". Rubbish, I said to myself at that time. I remembered these words again when I saw recovering children from Iraq throwing hospital pillows at each other. Those were children who had undergone serious heart surgeries in Czechia as part of MEDEVAC. They had come to the Czech Republic as "immobile grey dolls" and now their pink faces were laughing. I think of a Cambodian child at a large press conference, who had been cured thanks to MEDEVAC and who took a camera with a huge lens from a photographer and ran down the aisle directly to the speakers. I realised that it really is our joint task at MEDEVAC to teach children to be naughty again. These are the nicest moments, which bring tears to one's eyes even many years later.

What does MEDEVAC mean to you personally?

To me, on a professional level,

MEDEVAC represents a project, which has a graspable beginning and end for us social workers. In social work, we most often do not get feedback from clients and MEDEVAC is different in that respect. It is a story, in which we are present throughout the client's stay in the Czech Republic. And I am grateful that the endings are usually happy and full of tears of emotion. Over the years, during which I collaborated with the Programme, I had many opportunities to be present at big as well as seemingly little things, which really change the world for the better because they change the lives of specific people. I have experienced many situations where it was necessary to overcome considerable barriers of sociocultural differences and language misunderstandings, which taught me many new things, which I can apply in all of my work.

On a personal level, I stopped being afraid of hospitals and I started to work with a target group about whom I had said that I would never work with.

I managed to work with people whose both bodies and souls were injured. With ill people, with people who were losing any hope of a better future. I met many different interesting and inspiring people both among clients and among the staff of the collaborating authorities, organisations, hospitals, etc.

In that close cooperation, I started to see them not only as officials, physicians and nurses but I also got to know their human side. Many remained in my life as friends or close acquaintances even after the end of a specific project. This always reminds me that, for example, I have still kept in touch with a former client from Pakistan for more than fifteen years, who eventually became one of the few who remained in the Czech Republic. Today, he already has a Czech wife, three children and takes care of his relative from Pakistan who lost his family. He contacts me almost regularly and asks: "Do you have time?" I usually answer that I do not, and he always replies: "But I have a ripe mango for you and that cannot wait. You need rest."



**2017: Training in Nepal, traumatology,
General UH © Mol CR**



Petr Hladík

Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The civil war in Syria also brought about a wave of migration both to the adjacent countries and to Europe and a refugee crisis. Jordan, to which hundreds of thousands of Syrians fled from the conflict, was one of the worst affected countries. The Ministry of the Interior of the CR responded to this crisis, which put an enormous strain on Jordan's healthcare system as well as its general infrastructure, with its humanitarian MEDEVAC and Aid in Place Programmes oriented on foreign countries. In the years of the largest migration crisis, Jordan was the country, which was most served by the Programmes – at that time, not only financial aid was provided to this country from both Programmes but up to 15 medical missions per year were also carried out. And it was Jordan where physicians were sent under the MEDEVAC Programme for the first time to operate on patients abroad – directly in a place where it was most needed. You

can read more about the beginnings of the MEDEVAC Programme in Jordan in the interview with Mgr. Petr Hladík, the Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the former ambassador in Amman, who was personally involved in this.

When did you encounter the MEDEVAC Programme for the first time and how did you become aware of it?

Due to the fact that I have worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since the 1990s, I encountered the MEDEVAC Programme right at its beginning. At that time, the Programme was primarily focused on the countries of former Yugoslavia. As a diplomat, I was addressing the consequences of the war in the Balkans, too, albeit from a different perspective than my colleagues at the Ministry of the Interior. However, even at that early stage, I already appreciated the positive impact of the Programme on the perception of the Czech Republic abroad, besides the main goal of MEDEVAC, of course: to provide medical assistance to those

who are most vulnerable, meaning children.

How do you remember the beginnings of the MEDEVAC Programme in Jordan? What stands out in your memories?

When I came to Jordan in 2013, MEDEVAC and treatment of Syrian children were in their early stages. Paradoxically, the red tape associated with the process and, from my point of view, the low efficiency of the process struck me most: the transfer of a few Syrian children to Czechia required a complicated vetting procedure for the persons accompanying the children because the ill or seriously injured children logically could not travel alone, and their safe transport to the Czech Republic also incurred considerable financial costs. To put it in plain words: "Not a lot of bang for the buck". After I had familiarised myself with the way the healthcare system worked in Jordan itself, which was of excellent quality in many respects, and after I had had the opportunity to present the same to the senior officials of the Ministry of the Interior, the MEDEVAC

Programme started to be implemented “in reverse order”: Czech physicians travelled to Jordan and operated on Syrian children directly on site. This allowed to expand the range of medical specialties as well as to increase the number of paediatric patients: during the last year of my job in Jordan, which was 2018, nearly one thousand patients successfully underwent surgical procedures.

How, in your opinion, has the Programme changed since the first medical missions started to be carried out in Jordan?

The Programme changed profoundly, as did the situation in the entire Middle Eastern region. At the beginning, the missions of our physicians in Jordan focused primarily on Syrian children and Syrian refugees in general, who were directly affected by the conflict taking place in neighbouring Syria. War injuries were surgically treated; the situation in refugee camps was literally desperate in the beginnings. However, the situation of Syrian refugees gradually somewhat stabilised, and it was necessary to focus more, for example, on treating birth defects in children and also to address the needs

of the Jordan population that was affected no less seriously by the war in Syria and the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Syrians. The most serious complication for MEDEVAC, which, however, appeared only after my departure from Jordan, was the global COVID pandemic.

What do you wish for the future of the MEDEVAC Programme?

The MEDEVAC Programme is an example of fantastic assistance, which the Czech Republic is able to provide around the world thanks to the excellent quality of our healthcare system. I have been asked many times why we help in this way at all, considering that we have enough problems of our own back home. These questions were mostly asked by people who do not understand that MEDEVAC not only helps but also reduces the migration potential in regions where people would simply have no access to high-quality medical care. But above all, it spreads the good name of our healthcare professionals and our country in general around the world. This is why I wish, most of all, that the MEDEVAC Programme has the certainty of its continuation into the future and carries on for many more successful years!



2018 evacuation from Afghanistan, cardiac surgery Motol UH © Mol CR (photo by: Adam Hříbal)



2023: Zambia, ENT mission, Motol UH © Mol CR



Lukáš Němec

Former coordinator of the
MEDEVAC Programme

When I hear MEDEVAC, I remember names such as Tetiana, Fatima, Sham, Hamza, Ibrahim, as well as surnames such as Haišman, Mikolášová, Urubek, Burget, Bříza, Tláškal, Chomiak, Porsche, Špiroch, Obare, Al Qsous, Hladík, Pravdová, Smejkal. And many others! MEDEVAC stands and falls with the people around it. MEDEVAC is not a programme; it is a fabric of interpersonal relations, officials in the Czech Republic, Czech diplomats abroad, physicians and social workers, which help the most vulnerable people get a new chance at living a dignified life. It can be emotionally quite draining... To search for a common path for all those involved, to see the signed files, to be able to come to terms with the fact that some things are not possible even though you want them very much, to see cured patients or to

stand in front of those whom you cannot help. What comes to my mind when MEDEVAC is mentioned? Unconditional commitment, total emotions, complete exhaustion, boundless happiness. I have a recommendation – if you have the chance, go and do it!

And what does MEDEVAC mean specifically to me? With MEDEVAC, I pushed myself to the limits, both in my professional life and personal life. Sometimes beyond the limits... So, if I am to tell you what MEDEVAC means specifically to me, it is the life-changing meeting with Tomáš Haišman, the former Director of the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy, and his reminder, which guides me up to this day whenever I am losing my way: “Němeeeeeeec, take it easy!”



**2023: Traumatology mission,
Olomouc UH © MoI CR**



2010: Children evacuated from Cambodia, paediatric cardiac surgery, Motol UH © Mol CR



2012: Syrian refugees evacuated from Jordan, traumatology, General UH © Mol CR

Léčíme ty, kteří nemají čím zaplatit

Lékař Filip Burget mluví třemi světovými jazyky, po světě jezdí už od studií a toulavé boty nezhadil ani coby trojnásobný otec. Právě se vrátil z Jordánska, kde léčil syrské uprchlíky.



Fakta Jak a kde pomáhá Medevac

Česko zahájilo projekt v roce 1993 v reakci na válečný konflikt v bývalé Jugoslávii. Medevac je služba, která zabezpečuje převoz raněného z bojiště do zdravotnického zařízení. Jde o činnost, která probíhá ve velmi stresových situacích a pod časovým tlakem. Pod Medevac také spadají humanitární evakuace zdravotně postižených obyvatel a je určena zejména dětským pacientům. Jeho prostřednictvím se v českých nemocnicích léčilo přes 200 pacientů z Bosny a Hercegoviny, Čečenska, Kosova, Iráku, Afghánistánu, Pákistánu, Kambodže, Libye, Barmy, Sýrie a Ukrajiny.

děti bez končetin, co jim ma vybuchla mina... Či rychle uvědomí, jak se dobře.

Jak vnímáte lícitace plem počtu uprchlíků, ko přijme?

Jsem zastáncem solidárpu. Češi jsou kolikrát a v každém hned vidí teroristu. Ale samozřejmě jimat lidi bez omezení prověřeni.

Čím vás oslovila práva a traumatologie?

Na těchto oborech je efekt vidíte hned po zák se věnuji i horské a spor čině. Možná mám v sí

Ivana Karásková
reportérka

Article in MF Dnes, July 2015, traumatology, General UH

Filip Burget byl v Jordánsku už posedmé. Foto: Yan Renell, MAERA

Filip Burget zavítal v červnu do Jordánska už posedmé. Tentokrát v zemi působil



2014: Evacuation of 11 patients from Ukraine, traumatology, General UH, Military University Hospital Prague and Motol UH © MoI CR



2012: A patient evacuated from Libya, traumatology, General UH © MoI CR



About the AID IN PLACE Programme

The Government of the Czech Republic created the Aid in Place Programme on 14 January 2015 by Resolution No. 19. Since 2015, this Programme has been flexibly responding to the current situation in the field of migration and forced displacement around the world and provides a targeted and effective assistance to displaced persons and to countries facing heavy migratory pressure, thus helping prevent illegal migration to the European Union and enhance security in the European area.

In June 2021, an updated policy for the Aid in Place Programme titled Policy for the Ministry of the Interior's Aid in Place Programme as an Instrument of External Migration Policy of the Czech Republic was approved by Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 557 of 21 June 2021. The main goal of the new policy was to create an integrated conceptual and methodological framework, through which the priorities of the Ministry of the Interior will be identified for the Aid in Place Programme as the instrument of external migration policy of the CR.

The main goals of the support defined by the current policy include:

- 1. To protect and support forcibly displaced persons and other vulnerable persons on the move;**
- 2. To support the asylum, migration and integration**

systems of countries facing heavy migratory pressure;

3. To prevent illegal migration and human trafficking.

The projects funded under the Aid in Place Programme are implemented in partnership with individual foreign governments, international organisations or international non-governmental organisations. In order to enhance the impact of interventions, the Ministry of the Interior strives to implement projects in cooperation with other Member States of the European Union.

In the years 2015 through 2023, a total of **69 projects** in **33 countries** were supported under the Aid in Place Programme. The amount allocated to addressing the migration crisis has reached **CZK 1.3 billion since 2015**.

Aid in Place Programme in Number for 2015–2023

CZK 1.3 billion

allocated to solutions to the migration crisis since 2015

33 countries

on 3 continents where the Programme operates

69 projects

and support of another 5 multilateral programmes

33 implementation partners

from among international organisations and governmental institutions

25 thousand children of refugees

whom Aid in Place provided with protection

750 thousand refugees

whom Aid in Place gave a helping hand



An Armenian family was forced to leave Nagorno-Karabakh © UNHCR Karen Minasyan

Aid in Place in 2023

In 2023, the budget of the Aid in Place Programme amounted to CZK 150 million.

Therefore, it was possible **to support 7 projects and 1 regional programme in a total of 10 countries** under the Programme in 2023: Armenia, Jordan, Cyprus, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Greece, Senegal, Tunisia and Türkiye. This was done in accordance with the priorities defined for the year 2023 **in the countries along the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan migratory routes (priority 1), in the countries along the Central Mediterranean migratory route (priority 2) and in the countries along the Western Mediterranean migratory route (priority 3).**

The financial donations to Cyprus, Libya, Malta, Greece, Senegal and Tunisia were granted as Czech contributions under the European Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism based on the Solidarity Declaration, which was adopted by the majority of the Member States of the European Union (EU), including the Czech Republic (CR), on 22 June 2022.

Just as in previous years, particular attention was paid to vulnerable groups of persons, especially children and minors, in the support of projects in 2023.

Beyond the regular annual budget and priorities, special assistance was also provided to Ukraine and neighbouring Moldova under the Aid in Place Programme in 2023 in connection with the Russian aggression in Ukraine. This special assistance was based on the Programme of Humanitarian, Stabilising, Reconstructive and Economic Assistance to Ukraine in 2023-2025 (the Ukraine Programme), which the Government of the Czech Republic approved on 12 October 2022.

As part of the Aid in Place Programme, implementation of 4 projects in Ukraine and 1 project in Moldova was supported with a total of CZK 70 million in 2023. Other assistance was provided through the MEDEVAC Permanent Medical Humanitarian Programme.

Projects Supported from the Regular Budget

Country	Financial donation amount	Implementation partner	Implementation period	Project name
Priority 1 – Eastern Mediterranean and West Balkan migratory routes				
Jordan Lebanon	CZK 25 million	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark	01/01/2023 – 31/12/2026	Contribution to Phase III of the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for the Middle East
Cyprus	CZK 12.5 million	Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus	01/01/2023 – 31/12/2026	Support of construction of an accommodation centre for unaccompanied minor applicants for international protection
Greece	CZK 12.5 million	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	01/03/2023 – 31/12/2023	Safe zones for unaccompanied minor applicants for international protection on Greek islands
Priority 2 – Central Mediterranean migratory route				
Malta Libya	CZK 25 million	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Malta	18/10/2023 – 17/10/2026	Development of the capacities of Libyan authorities in the field of migration and border management and in-kind support for the Maltese government to help with maritime border protection

Tunisia	CZK 25 million	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	03/07/2023 – 03/01/2025	Support of voluntary returns and reintegration of migrants in Tunisia
Priority 3 – Western Mediterranean migratory route				
Senegal	CZK 25 million	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	01/11/2023 – 30/04/2025	Support of reintegration of the Senegalese returnees and prevention of illegal migration from Senegal (Phase II)
Emergency situations				
Armenia	CZK 12.5 million	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	01/10/2023 – 31/03/2024	Support of refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia
Türkiye	CZK 12.5 million	International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)	01/07/2023 – 30/06/2024	Support of migrants, refugees and the local community affected by the devastating earthquake in Türkiye
			Total	CZK 150 million



Mined area survey, Ukraine © HALO Trust

920

Projects supported by the Aid in Place Programme

Country	Financial donation amount	Implementation partner	Implementation period	Project name
Priority 1 – Eastern Mediterranean and West Balkan migratory routes				
Moldova	CZK 15 million	International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)	01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024	Technical support for the Moldovan Border Police Inspectorate
Ukraine	CZK 25 million	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024	Support of returnees, internally displaced persons and the host community in the Dnipropetrovsk Region
Ukraine	CZK 20 million	HALO Trust	01/08/2023 – 31/07/2024	Support of humanitarian demining
Ukraine	CZK 5 million	Kryla Nadiyi	01/11/2023 – 31/05/2024	Psychosocial support for internally displaced inhabitants in the west of Ukraine
Ukraine	CZK 5 million	Myrne Nebo	01/11/2023 – 31/10/2024	Raising awareness about the protection of health among residents in mine-contaminated areas
			Total	CZK 70 million

Project Implementation Monitoring

In cooperation with embassies, the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic monitors all the projects supported under the Aid in Place Programme on a regular and ongoing basis. Implementation partners present an interim report and final report on project implementation, including a statement of payments from the budget, to the Ministry of the Interior.

In addition to this, coordinators of the Aid in Place Programme also carry out detailed monitoring of activities and outputs of selected projects directly on the site of the implementation in cooperation with the relevant embassies of the Czech Republic in the given country and local partners.

In 2023, a monitoring trip was made to Senegal. A monitoring trip to Lebanon was also planned but had to be cancelled in November 2023 due to the adverse security situation in the region.

Senegal

The purpose of the trip to Senegal carried out in the period from 30 April to 3 May 2023 was to monitor the

International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) project titled Support of Reintegration of Senegalese Returnees and Prevention of Illegal Migration from Senegal. This project was supported from the Aid in Place Programme in 2021 with CZK 25 million.

As part of the monitoring trip, the coordinator of the Aid in Place Programme and the representative of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Dakar visited the province of Tambacounda where the predominant part of project activities was implemented to support job opportunities for returned migrants and young people prone to migrate. The participants of the mission visited several beneficiaries of the financial and in-kind support and technical skill training.

They also met with the IOM's partners who participated

in implementation of the project. All the visited beneficiaries expressed high satisfaction with the support they received. They even managed to expand their businesses and, in many case, even to employ additional persons. According to their own words, the beneficiaries try to further disseminate the information on job opportunities in the region and be model examples for other young people.

Several men who received the support confided that they had been considering a trip to Europe in the past but that they were no longer considering a trip to Europe and they saw their future in Senegal now that they had a successful business in Tambacounda and were even able to employ other people. Some even

expressed their desire to share this experience with other people in the community. The project monitoring showed that if young people had job opportunities in Tambacounda, they would not have the tendency to leave the region.

The representatives of the local town hall, the governor of the region and the representatives of a local development agency also rated the project as highly effective and contributing to prevention of migration of young people from the Tambacounda region. As a follow-up to this monitoring, the Ministry of the Interior recommended considering supporting and continuing a project with the same focus and similar outputs and implementing it in other poor regions of Senegal.



Monitoring mission in the province of Tambacounda, Senegal © IOM



**A farmer who received support from the Czech project.
Senegal © Mol CR**



**Thanks to the Czech project, many farmers were able to
employ other young people in the region. Senegal © IOM**



**If they have jobs in Senegal,
they feel no need to leave the
country. © Mol CR**



One of the greatest challenges faced by farmers in Senegal are the ever-longer droughts. © IOM

We thank all who participate in the MEDEVAC Programme

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MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

MECEVAC