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Tobias Ellwood MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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2 November 2015

Dear Mr Ellwood,

RE: Kunduz Hospital, Afghanistan

I am writing on behalf of the British Medical Association to seek the support of the UK government in calling on President Obama to agree to an independent investigation into the sustained bombing by coalition forces of the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) trauma facility in Kunduz, Afghanistan on 3 October.

As I am sure you are aware, on that night, twelve hospital staff members and at least ten patients, including three children were killed, with a further two members of staff presumed dead. In addition, 37 people, including 19 staff members were injured. All parties to the conflict were given the accurate GPS co-ordinates of the hospital and yet it was precisely hit several times by coalition bombing.

Although MSF has received an apology from President Obama, we strongly support MSF's call for a full, open, transparent and independent investigation, led by the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, to establish what happened in Kunduz, why it happened and how it happened. Only a fully independent investigation is appropriate for such an egregious and deadly violation of both the Geneva Conventions and the universally binding prohibition on breaches of medical neutrality. Relying on an internal investigation by a party to the conflict would be woefully inadequate.

It is vital that the international community stands united in its defence of the fundamental principle of medical immunity.

I look forward to your assistance in calling for this inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Dr John Chisholm CBE
Chair, BMA Medical Ethics Committee

Chief executive: Keith Ward