



## **Instructions**

First Aid Service in Medjugorje

Status April 2022

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### 1. Preface

Medjugorje is situated in Bosnia and Hercegovina, ca. 20 km south-west of Mostar and ca. 30 km north of Metkovic.

On 24. June 1981 six children/adolescences reported an apparition of the mother of god (in Croatian „Gospa“). These apparitions continue following the reports of the viewers until today – with some of the viewers on a daily basis. The catholic church up to now has not officially decided on the authenticity of these apparitions. Estimated 1 million pilgrims come to Medjugorje each year. Beyond a narrow geographical area, the events have a considerable positive impact on the faith and the religious life of people. Numerous miracles (incidences that cannot be explained with scientific knowledge) have been reported.

To assist with medical service, groups associated with the Order of Malta (SMOM) support pilgrims since 1996 in the context of the order's international humanitarian help on demand of the local parish of St. Jacob, Medjugorje, and of the civil community of Čitluk. Originally originated by Malteser Hilfsdienst from Germany, the activity has become increasingly international.

## 2. Basics

### i. SMOM – Marijina Pomoc (MP)

The medical service of the Ambulance is being provided by the association Marijina Pomoc (MP) and its doctors and nurses. MP is being supported by volunteers from SMOM. MP is an association of Bosnian legislation. It carries the responsibility for the ambulance station and its building (the latter being provided by the St. Jacob parish). There is no juridical connection between MP and SMOM.

The first aid helpers are to follow the instructions of the medical staff.

### ii. Period of Service

Each year the service lasts from Palm Sunday through the end of October.

### iii. Arrival

Depending on the departing location, arrival via plane or car can be advisable.

- Travel via car can be more economically if there are more than two persons travelling in one vehicle.
- For arrival via plane, Mostar is the airport closest to Medjugorje (30 km). Sarajevo (150 km) or Split/Croatia (140 km) are considerably further away.
- From Mostar and Sarajevo transfer via taxi can be organised through our contacts in Medjugorje at relatively low cost. Taxis from Split/Croatia are considerably more expensive as Bosnian taxis are not allowed to pick-up passengers abroad.
- In Medjugorje there is a care available for tasks related to the official service of SMOM. For tax reasons this must not be used for private purposes (e.g. sightseeing).

### iv. The Team of SMOM volunteers

The ideal manning of a team includes four volunteers under the guidance of a team leader. They work in two shifts. At peak times

- at the day of the first apparition on June 24/25,
- at the youth festival beginning of August,
- at the feast of Mary's assumption on August 15 and
- at the feast of the cross, in Medjugorje commonly celebrated on the Sunday closest to September 14

a higher number of team members is advisable. In case there are fewer team members, the ability to comply with the responsibilities is limited.

**v. Functional Qualification**

For the operation, qualified personnel is required. This includes ambulance-men/paramedics or nurses with experience in ambulance services. Volunteers with basic education in first aid services can complement these as part of the team.

The volunteers should be physically fit (to access the Mountain of the Cross or the Mountain of Apparitions etc.).

**vi. Background on Medjugorje**

SMOM is being supported in Medjugorje by Milona Habsburg, a close friend of some of the viewers who lives in Medjugorje since 1984. If not absent, she is ready to inform new teams on the background and the history of the events around the apparitions. The Leader of Mission/Team Leader agrees with her on a time for such a briefing.

**vii. Participation at the spiritual program at the pilgrim's location**

The aim of the service in Medjugorje beyond the technical assistance to pilgrims is the possibility to participate at the services and events offered by the parish. The service schedule should facilitate this. Regular events include

- holy Mass (offered in several languages – see information office of the parish). International holy mass daily at 7:00 pm on the celebration square behind the church,
- rosary, daily at 6:00 pm on the square behind the church,
- procession on the hill of apparition (on Sundays at 4:00 pm) and on the hill of the cross (on Fridays at 4:00 pm).
- eucharist adoration (on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 10:00 pm on the square behind the church.
- other special events according to the liturgical calendar.

It might make sense for the volunteers to participate at such events in working cloth equipped with the backpack for first aid. This allows for them to be addressed by pilgrims in need for help.

**viii. Accommodation/Leisure time**

The accommodation of the volunteers of SMOM is in the first floor of the ambulance station.

During their leisure time in agreement with the team leader, the volunteers may also stay at other places in Medjugorje. They should have a mobile phone with them such that they can be called in case of need.

The team leader can, requirements permitting, also allow for leisure time for half or full days, e.g. for excursions in the environment.

**ix. Personal conduct**

The personal conduct of each volunteer during the service in Medjugorje should be guardedly reserved, polite and accommodating. An immaculate demeanor towards pilgrims, the associates of Marijina Pomoc and in the public as well as a loyal and companionable association of volunteers among each other should go without saying.

We are guests in a country that is still formed by strong contrasts and ethnical tensions. In discussions, personal views should therefore be expressed with reservation.

**x. Leader of Mission/Team Leader**

The Leader of Mission - if there is one present - otherwise the Team Leader is responsible for the personnel and organizational operation. Associated with it, he is also carrying responsibility for the wellbeing and the safety of the volunteers. The directives of the Leader of Mission or the Team Leader respectively are to be followed.

The leaders cooperate closely with the pastor of the parish of St. Jacob who is the owner of the ambulance station.

Field reports on the operations in Medjugorje by the responsible leader, addressed to the coordinator and the person generally responsible for the mission of SMOM in Medjugorje are welcome.

**xi. Safety**

The access to grounds of the roads (for the better perspective for a foto) are prohibited. There continue to be risks from mines and other war materials.

### 3. Responsibilities

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Teamleader	acc. to schedule Mobile 1: +387 (0)63 682 482

### 4. Mission

In a nutshell, the responsibilities of SMOM in Medjugorje are:

- the support of Marijina Pomoc so far as possible upon request by the association, if required also in the civil community of Medjugorje.
- the reception of patients in the ambulance station and their registration.
- assistance to the treatment by doctors and nurses upon request.
- first aid service to patients in Medjugorje, especially around the church, on the hill of apparitions and on the hill of the cross.
- inspection tours and first aid in the context of events in and around the church.
- the transport of patients to the ambulance, esp. from the hill of apparitions and of the cross respectively, if required on stretchers.
- upon request by the medical personnel, transport of patients with the ambulance car to the public ambulance station in Čitluk or to the hospital in Mostar.
- treatments are to be limited to measures of first aid. Transfusions and injections as well as the provision of medications are the sole responsibility of the doctor.
- lending of wheelchairs, walking frames or crutches.
- lending of oxygen cylinders.

- disinfection of all materials used by the staff of SMOM according to the respective instructions.

## **5. Ambulance/Material**

The ambulance station is located to the right of the church next to the parking lot.

It provides the following premises:

- the entrance area with the waiting room,
- three rooms for treatment,
- a storage room for materials, providing access to a toilet that is also used for disinfection,
- a toilet for handicapped people with a shower,
- a common room for personnel,
- a room for administrative purposes of Marijina Pomoc and the leader of the SMOM team,
- a locker room for doctors and nurses and
- a room for drugs and bandaging material.

All rooms of the ambulance and the accommodation area are to be treated with care. Cleanliness and hygiene are a priority. All areas of work of the SMOM team are to be disinfected on a weekly basis.

The whole building is a non-smoking area.

The check for sufficient supply of material in the storage room lies in the responsibility of the nurses of Marijina Pomoc. The containers for first aid material are to be checked and replenished by the staff of SMOM.

## **6. Personnel Staffing**

The reception area should regularly be staffed with two volunteers. If this is not possible - e.g. because the whole team is on a rescue mission on one of the hills - the Leader of Mission can occupy the reception. Otherwise the reception is in the responsibility of the nurses of Marijina Pomoc.

If there are not enough volunteers present, the team leader should ensure, that the volunteers still have sufficient possibilities to participate at spiritual events. In these cases there is also the possibility to ask for help for the care for patients or for rescue missions from

- the Cenacolo and/or

- the Mountain Rescue Service.

The respective contact details are available at the reception.

Upon arrival, new groups of volunteers are to be briefed by the previous group. This briefing is to be documented on the respective form sheet.

## **7. Times of Service**

The regular daily time of service is:

- from 09:00 am to 2:30 pm and
- from 3:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

Outside of these times of service, responsibility lies with the ambulance station in Čitluk.

## **8. Finance**

- i. The service to the patients principally is free of charge.
- ii. Donations for the ambulance are very welcome. They are required for the funding of the cost of Marijina Pomoc. SMOM supports Marijina Pomoc with its fundraising efforts. Unobtrusively, patients should be informed about the possibility of donations. Dispensers for donations are available in the waiting area and in the rooms for treatment.
- iii. Eventual allowances for volunteers should be treated as donations for MP.

## **9. Accommodation of the volunteers**

The accommodation for all volunteers is foreseen in the living quarters in the first floor of the ambulance building. There are:

- a common room and a kitchen
- 1 bedroom with 4 beds
- 1 bedroom with 3 beds and
- 1 bedroom with 2 beds (for the leader of mission).

Each room has a separate shower and toilet.

Each team should nominate a person responsible for cleanliness and orderliness in the living quarters.

Bed linen and towels are available in sufficient quantity.

The rooms are to be assigned by the team leader. Flexible arrangements might be required if the leaving team and the new coming team overlap for a night.

As of 11:00 pm there should be silence during the night.

Please ensure a restrictive use of energy, esp. during the heating season. Short power-ventilation and shut windows otherwise; closed doors; economic use of water and electricity.

## 10. Dress code

Reception area:	Blue trousers, white shirt/polo shirt.
Ambulance car:	Blue trousers, white shirt/polo shirt.
Rescue mission/patrol:	blue trousers for operations; jacket for operations; white shirt or white polo shirt; if available, all shirts and jackets with logo of SMOM-organisation; no foreign logos. blue baseball cap with logo of SMOM-organisation.
headgear:	

The service clothing (with logo) must not be worn during leisure time.

## 11. Ambulance Car/Passenger Car

### i. Basics:

- a. The ambulance car is property of Malteser Hilfsdienst.
- b. The ambulance car must only be manned with personnel qualified for ambulance services.
- c. The Leader of Mission or team leader check the driving licence. A special licence for BiH is not required.
- d. New teams are to be briefed by the leaving team including a drive to the ambulance station in Čitluk, to the hill of apparitions/of the cross. The briefing is to be documented in the driver's log.
- e. The ambulance car is equipped with the most urgent requirements. A change requires the agreement of the leader of mission.
- f. The personnel for the ambulance car is responsible for the cleanliness of the car.
- g. After each drive with patients, at least once per week, the ambulance car is to be disinfected. The disinfection is to be documented in the log for disinfections.

- h. After each pull-out, the medical equipment is to be checked. Missing material is to be restocked.
- i. The form sheet for protocols on each transport is to be filled-in after each operation and to be handed to the doctor in duty in the ambulance station.
- j. Upon reversing, the assistant driver has to direct the driver from outside.
- k. The ambulance car and the passenger car are insured in Germany. In case of accidents, the police have to be called. A quote has to be sent to the coordinator before commissioning repair work.

## **ii. Passenger Car**

There is a passenger car available for service related drives. For tax reasons its use is strictly limited to needs of the service (e.g. commissioning of material, picking-up volunteers from the airport).

If a car is required for an excursion, visit of a restaurant etc. please use taxi, rental car or public transport.

## **iii. Driver**

- a. At the start of service (of a new team), the driver has to check the car for proper technical condition (oil, gas, lightning, tire pressure, medical equipment). Please personally fix smaller deficiencies.
- b. Bigger damages are to be commissioned for repair work at a garage in accordance with the leader of mission/team leader following consultation with the coordinator.
- c. Each drive is to be recorded in the driver's log.
- d. For emergency and patient transport to the ambulance station in Čitluk use the ambulance car of SMOM. An eventually required transport to a hospital is to be executed by the public ambulance service (not withstanding special emergency situations upon instruction by the doctor).
- e. In case of emergency transports, the medical team has to announce the arrival of the ambulance car.
- f. The use of the siren must be limited to real emergency situations. Driving with an active siren requires utmost care.

## **iv. Location**

- The location of the ambulance car is generally under the roof in front of the ambulance station.
- All other cars are to be parked on the parking lot aside the ambulance building.

## 12. Radio/Telephone

Equipment for communication via radio is available. It should only be used if communication via mobile phone isn't possible.

There are four mobile phones available, each equipped with a SIM-Card of BiH. One of these is for the Leader of Mission/Team leader, the other three for the team. In the area of Medjugorje, the quality of connections via mobile phone generally is very good.

While on stand-by, team members must be reachable via mobile phone.

If never-the-less required, equipment for radio is available:

1 Fix station	Name: Malta Medjugorje
1 manual set	Name: Malta 1
1 manual set	Name; Malta 2
1 set for ambulance car	Name: Malta 85

- The radio equipment is authorised for use by the ministry for traffic and radio of Bosnia I Hercegovina.
- The use of the fix station is in the responsibility of the ambulance station. It has to be manned in the case of use of radio.
- Discipline for the use of radio is to be observed.
- After use, the batteries are to be recharged.

## 13. Internet

It is possible to use the WLAN in the ambulance station for private purposes.

## 14. Pilgrimage program

The daily pilgrimage program during the season is as follows:

- Service in several languages in the parish church during the morning. On Sundays, some of these are in the so called "yellow house".
- Processions at 4:00 pm on the Hill of the Cross (Fridays) and on the Hill of Apparitions (Sundays).
- Rosary at 6:00 pm on the square behind the church.
- International service at 7:00 pm on the square behind the church.
- Evening devotion (with rosary) in the parish church or on the square behind the church at 9:00 pm.

- Eucharistic adoration in the church or on the square behind the church (not on a regular basis, depends on the programme of the day).
- Actual information on the programme is displayed on the bulletin of the Pilgrimage Office next to the church.

The participation at the pilgrimage program by team members is on a voluntary basis. The Leader of Mission and/or the Team leader are to inform the team members of the programme and are to organise the schedule of service such, that a participation is being facilitated.