

LESS EQUAL THAN OTHERS

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When I was reading "Letter from Bosnia" in the New England Journal of Medicine¹, I at once remembered an Editorial entitled "Less equal than others" published in the Lancet².

I used to believe in "human rights" for all people without consideration of their color, nationality, race, sex, religion, poorness or richness etc. However, I am almost losing my faith in human rights and the United Nations idea because of the indifference of the world towards people's lives, more specifically children's lives, in some parts of the world such as Bosnia Herzegovina, Caucasia, etc. The European champions of human rights used to draw attention to the condition of people in prison in developing countries, suggesting some standards according to European opinions². However, I don't hear their voices being raised for the largest prison in Europe, Bosnia Herzegovina.

UNICEF being most sensitive about children's condition, also has not been active in saving children's lives on both sides of Bosnia Herzegovina. Poor and less organized communities cannot speak up adequately to gain attention from world organizations, but they are the people who require the most help. Thus we may soon lose our faith in these international organizations completely.

I am urging educated people, more specifically doctors, all over the world to raise their voices for the sake of poor and disorganized people, and in this way to show their sensitivity to human life, which is the most essential of human rights.

I am more concerned about medical people's reactions since they do their best every day to save lives even in hopeless situations. On this occasion, healthy people who cannot be held responsible for this senseless war are being killed in the middle of Europe. Are those people less equal than the rest?

REFERENCES

1. Godstein R. Letter from Bosnia. New Engl J Med 1993; 329: 1745.
2. Bertrand D, Harding T. European guidelines on prison health. Lancet 1993; 342: 253-4.

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