

## **FLYING DOCTORS: Photography exhibition will present the Czech Republic's foreign aid programmes**

**From February 5 to March 16, 2018, a photography exhibition depicting the activities of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic's foreign aid programmes – the MEDEVAC programme and the refugee assistance programme – will be taking place on the premises of the National Technical Library in Prague-Dejvice.**

*“The Czech Republic believes that the assistance provided through these two programmes is meaningful and contributes to dealing with the difficult challenges related to the refugee question,”* said Interior Minister Lubomír Metnar. Within the framework of the MEDEVAC programme, the Ministry of the Interior sends specialised medical teams from Czech hospitals to crisis-stricken locations. In 2016 and 2017 alone, these teams performed over 1,500 surgeries and helped treat mainly Syrian refugees in Jordan. The Ministry of the Interior's refugee assistance programme focuses on projects supporting refugees in the first safe country and on assisting states that host a large number of refugees. Between 2015 and 2016, the programme supported the construction of many new shelters in the north of Iraq and Jordan as well as making electricity distribution more effective in the Zaatari camp in Jordan, the largest refugee camp for Syrian refugees in the Middle East.

*“In the MEDEVAC programme, it is not about surgery alone, since we have performed hundreds of them, but it is also about the direct socioeconomic consequences these surgeries bring: children can go back to school and adults can return to the labour market. The MEDEVAC programme returns independence to people and gives them a new opportunity in their temporary safe haven. Many people decide to undergo a dangerous journey to Europe, as they no longer see any options in the place they are at. The Czech Republic gives opportunity back to them. The Flying Doctors exhibition brings a message that the Czech Republic knows how to help,”* stated Pavla Novotná, director of the Asylum and Migration Policy Department at the Ministry of the Interior.

The origin of the photographs is described by the photographer, Jiří Pasz, who accompanied the medical teams to six countries: *“Essentially, I documented the export of miracles and the Czech teams' unbelievable professionalism and expertise. Czechs have something to be proud of. They do specific things with a specific impact, and that's important within the difficult, ongoing migration process. I saw heart, brain and eye surgeries and burn operations... Choosing the photographs was not easy; we made a selection from several thousand of them and wanted visitors to see the Czech teams directly in action and also to show the context through photographs from the conflict locations.”*

Entrance to the Flying Doctors exhibition is free, and after its premiere at the National Technical Library in Prague it will be presented in other places both in the Czech Republic (Olomouc and Hradec Králové) and abroad (Brussels, Geneva, Berlin and New York). The exhibition at the National Technical Library will be accompanied by a programme that will include, for instance, a discussion with the Czech ambassador to

Jordan and tours led by participants in the MEDEVAC programme. Updated information about the exhibition can be found at [www.flyingdoctors.cz](http://www.flyingdoctors.cz)

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