

TWO DECADES OF IMPACT

The 20th Anniversary of the INSARAG IEC/R System



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Dedication

To those who created,
To those who sustain and strengthen,
And to the next generation, who will further enhance
international USAR cooperation.
Your work has repeatedly proven its importance
in the hardest times - saving lives, shaping the future,
and inspiring us all.



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ACRONYMS

- AEME :Africa, Europe and Middle East
- AI:Artificial Intelligence
- AP :Asia-Pacific
- ASR2/3/4:Assessment, Search and Rescue Levels 2, 3, and 4
- DACC:Damage Assessment Coordination Cell
- DG ECHO:Directorate-General for European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
- EDT2L:Emergency Deployable Team 2
- EMT:Emergency Medical Team
- ERE:Earthquake Response Exercise
- EU MODEX:European Union Module Exercise
- EXCON:.....Exercise Control
- FOG:Field Operations Guide
- GRG:Guidelines Review Working Group
- ICMS:INSARAG Coordination and Management System
- IEC/R:INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification
- IEC:INSARAG External Classification
- IER:INSARAG External Reclassification
- INSARAG:International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
- IRNAP:INSARAG Recognized National Accreditation Process
- ISG:INSARAG Steering Group
- IT:Information Technology
- K9:canine
- LEMA:Local Emergency Management Authority
- NAP:National Accreditation Process
- NGO:Non-governmental Organization
- NREMT:National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians
- OCHA:Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- OSOCC:On-Site Operation Coordination Centre
- RDC:Reception/Departure Center
- SARCOP:Search and Rescue Cooperative Platform
- SCC:Sector Coordination Cell
- SOP:Standard Operating Procedure
- UAV:Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
- UCC:USAR Coordination Cell
- UCPM:Union Civil Protection Mechanism
- UN GA:United Nations General Assembly

- UN:United Nations
- UNDAC:United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
- UNDRO :.....Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
- USAR:Urban Search and Rescue
- WHO:World Health Organization

TEAMS, ORGANISATIONS:

- AFDRU:Austrian Forces Disaster Relief Unit
- BHA:Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USA)
- CISAR:China International Search and Rescue Team
- DART:Disaster Assistance Response Team
- FCDO:United Kingdom: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- FEMA:Federal Emergency Management Agency (USA)
- HUNOR :Hungarian National Organization for Rescue Services
- HUSZÁR:Hungarian National Integrated Organisation for Rescue Service
- JICA:Japan International Cooperation Agency
- MOFA:Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- NDGDM:..... National Directorate General for Disaster Management (Hungary)
- OFDA :Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
- PRT:Pakistan Rescue Team
- PUI:Pompiers De L'Urgence Internationale
- SCDF:Singapore Civil Defence Force
- THW/ SEEBA: ...Technisches Hilfswerk / Schnell-Einsatz-Einheit Bergung Ausland (Germany)
- UK ISAR:United Kingdom International Search and Rescue
- UKSART :United Kingdom Search And Rescue Team (former UK ISAR)
- USAID:United States Agency for International Development



FOREWORD

Hungary's professional disaster management body, the National Directorate General for Disaster Management under the Ministry of the Interior, is a committed and proud member of the INSARAG Network. The invitation from the INSARAG Secretariat is an honour and a joy for me, as it allows me to present my country's rescue teams in a commemorative book that, by summarizing the 20 years of the IEC/R Procedure's activities, highlights the achievements of the past two decades.

Hungary's urban search and rescue team was the first in the world to obtain international certification in 2005. Our country currently has two certified rescue teams: the HUNOR "Heavy" USAR team, composed of professional firefighters, and the HUSZÁR "Medium" USAR team, made up of volunteers. Our rescue teams are constantly on standby, ready to save human lives anywhere in the world when needed. Together with my colleagues and the members of the rescue teams, I am filled with pride that we are part of the INSARAG community for nearly 3 decades. I am convinced that we have gained at least as much experience and knowledge to strengthen our organizational structure and resilience as our country and organization have contributed to the development of the INSARAG network.

The past 20 years of the INSARAG IEC/R Process undeniably demonstrate that effective response is built on joint efforts, as together we are much stronger. Our dynamically growing community is open and capable of adopting new and innovative solutions to make future interventions more effective and successful. It continuously evolves to respond as efficiently as possible to various disaster situations around the world and to provide help where it is needed most. I trust that, with the support of my colleagues and INSARAG, the publication presenting the past 20 years will be a worthy summary of the tasks accomplished and provide valuable guidance for future generations of USAR teams.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DR. ZOLTÁN GÓRA

Director General
National Directorate General for Disaster Management
Ministry of Interior



FOREWORD



As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the IEC/R system, it is a moment to reflect on the tremendous strides we have made in enhancing the effectiveness and reliability of urban search and rescue preparations and response across the globe. Since its inception, the IEC/R system has been a cornerstone of INSARAG's commitment to ensuring that urban search and rescue teams are equipped with the skills, equipment, and operational readiness required to work together and to save lives and reduce suffering in the aftermath of natural disasters.

Today, as we celebrate the continued success of this vital system, we are proud to witness the remarkable progress that has led to the classification of 58 INSARAG USAR Teams worldwide. These teams embody the excellence, dedication, and professionalism that are the hallmarks of INSARAG's mission to provide the highest quality humanitarian assistance in times of crisis.

The IEC/R system has not only helped standardize the operational capabilities of USAR Teams but also fostered a culture of cooperation, mutual support, and continuous improvement. By setting minimal standards for classification and reclassification, INSARAG has ensured that teams are prepared to respond swiftly and effectively when disaster strikes, saving countless lives in the process.

Looking ahead, it is essential that we continue to inspire and mentor the next generation of practitioners. The achievements of these past 20 years are just the beginning. The next generation must be prepared with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to face the ever-evolving challenges posed by natural disasters. As the global humanitarian community is increasingly interconnected, the importance of quality assurance through the IEC/R process cannot be overstated. It enables responders to be ready and capable to act when every minute counts.

As we move forward, the commitment to preparedness and response after earthquakes, cooperation and quality assurance will remain at the heart of INSARAG's work. The IEC/R system is a vital tool in shaping a future where the global humanitarian community is able to make a difference, no matter where disaster strikes.

On this significant anniversary, let us not only celebrate the achievements we have made but also reaffirm our collective commitment to quality, professionalism, and, most importantly, to saving lives and reducing suffering.

DOMINIK STILLHART

INSARAG Global Chair
Ambassador,

Deputy Director General for Swiss Development Cooperation,
Head of Swiss Humanitarian Aid at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



INSARAG
Preparedness Response



FOREWORD

For 20 years, the IEC/R system has played a vital role in further strengthening global disaster response. By ensuring that search and rescue teams operate in sync with internationally recognized standards, the system has enhanced coordination, efficiency, and, most importantly, the ability to save lives when disasters strike. This anniversary is not just a milestone—it is proof of the collective commitment of the global INSARAG network to saving lives.

At the heart of this achievement is INSARAG's mandate, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 (2002): to establish and promote globally accepted standards for USAR operations, ensuring a well-coordinated, effective international response in times of crisis. This mandate underscores INSARAG's role in building national and regional capacities, strengthening partnerships, and advancing operational readiness to meet the growing humanitarian needs of our time.

In today's world, the impacts of climate change and complex crises are increasing the scale and complexity of disasters. In this evolving landscape, INSARAG's mission remains as critical as ever. The focus on response preparedness, operational effectiveness, and international cooperation exemplifies the core principles of humanitarian action: humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

INSARAG's work aligns seamlessly with the UN OCHA mandate to coordinate emergency response and ensure that aid reaches those who need it most. By fostering partnerships, sharing expertise, and continuously improving response mechanisms, INSARAG is not only saving lives but also shaping the future of humanitarian action.

As we mark 20 years of the IEC/R system, we recognize the dedication of all those who have contributed to its success—responders, teams, governments, and partners. Your commitment has made a tangible difference in countless emergencies worldwide. Looking ahead, let us continue to strengthen our collective capacity, innovate, and uphold the values that define our work. Many things have changed over the past 20 years: the importance of INSARAG has only grown. Together, we will remain ready to respond when the world needs us most.

SARAH MUSCROFT

Chief, Response Support Branch, UN OCHA



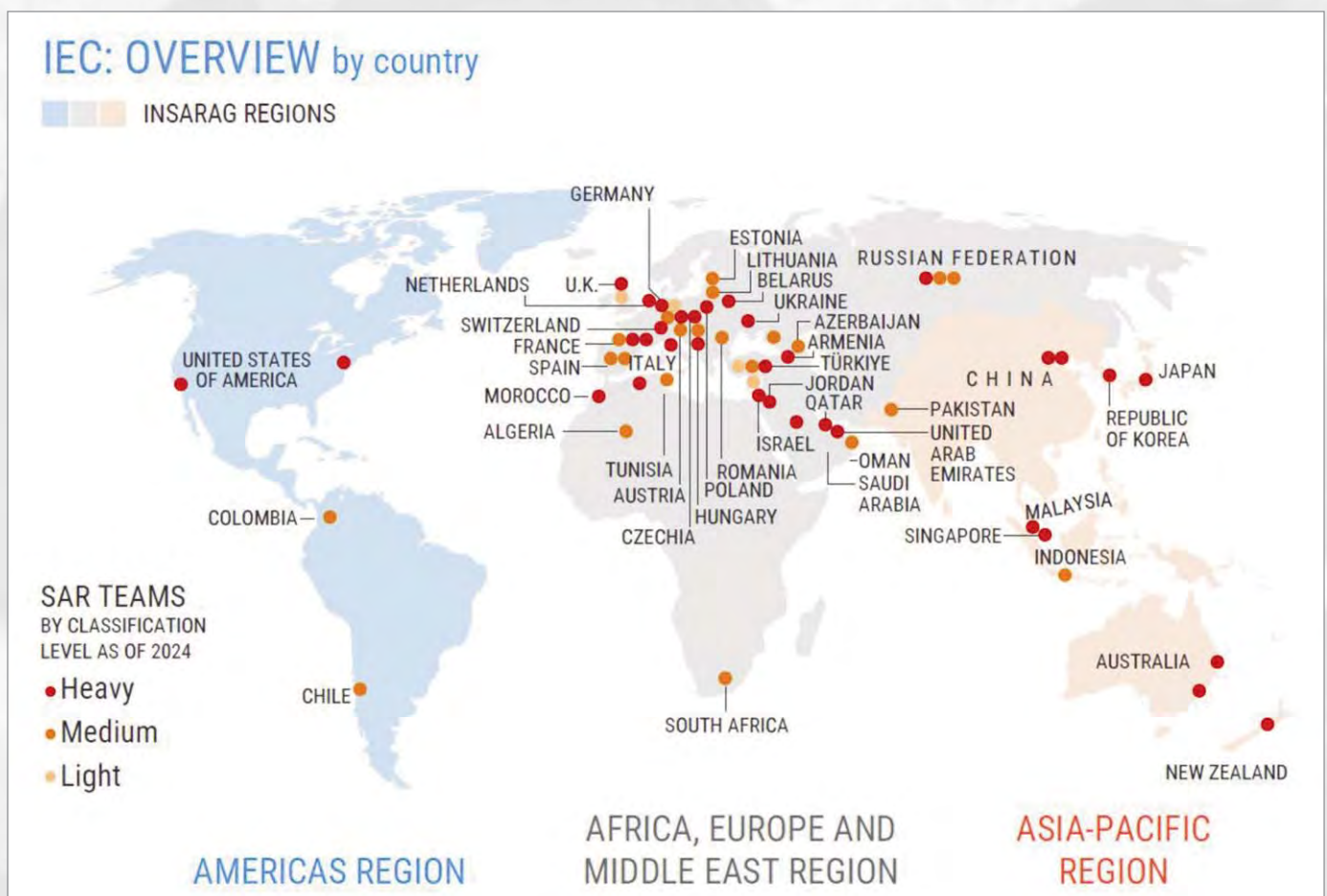
Introduction

As the INSARAG community celebrates the 20th anniversary of the IEC Process in 2025, the journey towards standardizing international USAR operations began much earlier: from 8 to 12 April 1991 an International Search and Rescue Workshop was held in Wattener Lizum, Austria. At this key event, experts from around the world convened to discuss and draft the foundational conclusions and recommendations in order to further strengthen the international USAR collaboration. Only seven months later, on 11-13 December, the inaugural meeting of the [International Search and Rescue Advisory Committee \(INSARAC\) was held in Beuggen, Germany](#). These early meetings not only established working procedures for USAR teams and international information coordination but also laid down quality criteria for teams to be included in the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO)¹ Directory of International Search and Rescue Teams—a

critical step in professionalizing and standardizing international rescue efforts.

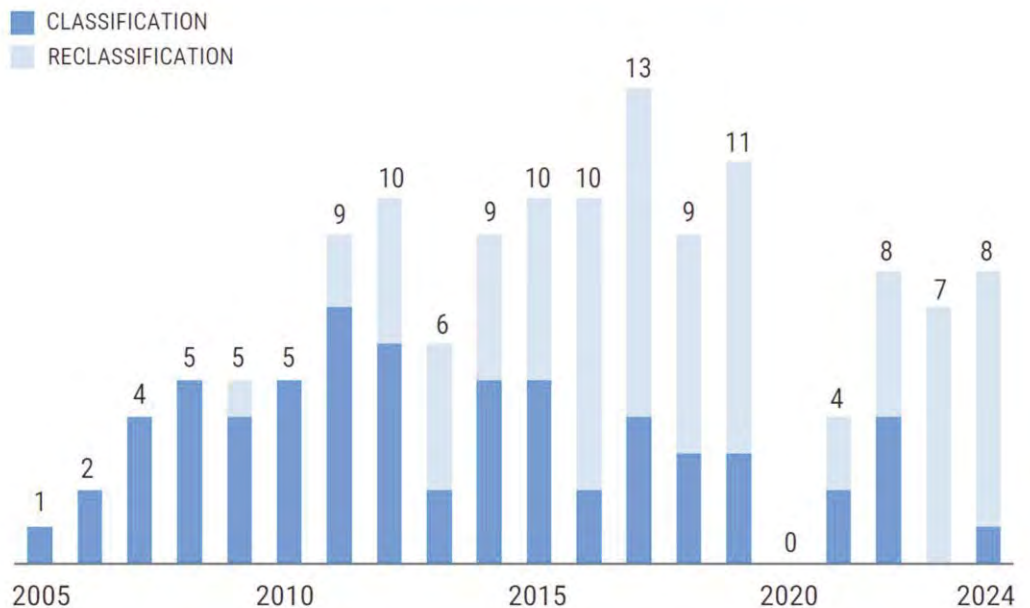
The initial set of minimum requirements for USAR teams, set in 1991, reflected a forward-thinking approach to emergency response. These standards required teams to be ready to offer assistance without delay and be prepared to depart from their home base within 12 hours of official notification. They stressed the importance of understanding local culture, including knowledge of local laws, customs, and the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA) structure. Teams needed to be self-sufficient for up to 14 days, equipped with both internal and external communication tools, and capable of conducting objective assessments in close collaboration with LEMA and the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC). The initial requirements also highlighted the importance of integrating local relief workers into USAR team structures, ensuring that teams were clearly identified with their national representatives in the affected country, and were equipped with personal protective equipment suitable for the local

Source: INSARAG EXTERNAL CLASSIFICATION Overview
INSARAG Secretariat
<https://insarag.org/iec/iec-news/new-snapshot-of-iec-rs-is-now-available/>



¹ The Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) was established in 1992 and in 1998 DHA became the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

IEC CLASSIFICATIONS AND RECLASSIFICATIONS by year



Source: INSARAG EXTERNAL CLASSIFICATION Overview
INSARAG Secretariat

<https://insarag.org/iec/iec-news/new-snapshot-of-iec-rs-is-now-available/>

weather. Teams were expected to maintain high professional standards, including the ability to communicate effectively with the local population and to adhere to international standards and guidelines for their specialized work.

A key moment in this journey was the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 in 2002 on [“Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance”](#) sponsored by 50 countries. This resolution helped to create a robust and credible evaluation system for international USAR teams by recognizing the INSARAG Guidelines as a common reference and urging countries to develop international USAR teams in accordance with the minimum requirements laid down in the Guidelines. The resolution provided the legitimacy needed to establish an objective, transparent, and universally accepted process for assessing the preparedness and capabilities of USAR teams. In 2005, Hungary, HUN-01 undertook the first global IEC, and 20 years later, Azerbaijan AZE-01 became the 58th classified team in our network.

This publication captures the experiences and insights of these teams across the globe that, by 2025, have completed 124 IEC/R exercises in total². As we mainly reflect on the IEC process and its development – which has been, without doubt, one of the most significant milestones –

we commemorate those early meetings in 1991, the adoption of the UN GA Resolution, through to the present day. This publication aims to honour the dedication, professionalism, and unwavering spirit of the USAR teams and the individuals who have contributed to this extraordinary international network. It is both a celebration of past achievements and a forward-looking vision for the continued evolution of international search and rescue operations.

This collective effort has created a resilient and effective system that ensures professionalism and excellence during operations. The affected governments can be assured that the teams arriving to assist are those that will make a tangible and positive difference in response efforts. Moreover, international teams working side by side can do so with confidence, knowing exactly who they are collaborating with. They can trust that all classified teams will operate consistently within the framework of the INSARAG Guidelines and Methodology, enhancing safety, coordination, and impact during critical rescue missions.

² The INSARAG Network completed 137 IEC/R exercises altogether. 7 teams from AEME region are no longer reclassifying

CREATION OF UN GA RESOLUTION 57/150

The foundation of INSARAG is the UN General Assembly Resolution 57/ 150 on “Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance.”. Without this UN General Assembly resolution, it would have been extremely difficult to develop the International External Classification (IEC) process of INSARAG.

The Article In the Annex (*Page 84*) traces how the initial demand for a legally binding Convention on urban search and rescue arose after the Spitak, Armenia, earthquake of 1988. How this demand was pursued and subsequently evolved into a soft law UN General Assembly Resolution acceptable to countries around the world. It dwells on the initial frustrations of the international search and rescue community in their inability to deploy quickly to an earthquake, as well as the issue of a large number of unprofessional search and rescue teams who also arrived at the site of an earthquake. It traces the quest for a means to resolve these issues and the role that the five earthquakes in 1999, especially in Turkey, played in acting as a trigger for pursuing a solution.

It traces the discussions that led to the formation of a Core Group of countries to draft a legally binding USAR Convention and how, ultimately, it evolved into a soft law UN General Assembly resolution, being more achievable. The article deals with the role played by many countries, organisations, and individuals in the development and drafting of this UN General Assembly Resolution On Urban Search and Rescue, without which it is unlikely that the IEC process and INSARAG Guidelines and methodology would have the widespread acceptance amongst countries around the world that it has today.



ARJUN KATOCH

Former Chief, Field Coordination Support Section, and Secretary of INSARAG,
UN OCHA (1999-2009)

After 2009, he was an advisor to the governments of Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar on emergency response issues. In recognition of his contributions to international emergency response, he was awarded medals from the governments of the Russian Federation and Abu Dhabi

THE JOURNEY TO THE FIRST IEC



While the INSARAG Guidelines greatly contributed to bringing together the USAR Teams that were already in existence, it highlighted the urgent need for consistency as well as command and control structures. Many USAR Teams had little experience in dealing with large numbers of casualties involving difficult and challenging entrapment situations. USAR Teams were generally experienced in situations highlighted in Civil Defence manuals and so on. Using basic tools and training for local incidents, in line with Fire Service Training methods.

The INSARAG Guidelines highlighted the need for an international system of professional standards, hence the initiation of the IEC/R process. Initially not all USAR Teams were keen on the idea of the IEC/R procedure, believing that it would restrict their ability to make their own decisions as to how, when and where they could carry out operations. Thereby losing control and flexibility at the site of operations. For those who wanted to become IEC/R qualified it presented a number of different challenges in the assessment areas. There were concerns expressed over the impartiality, language and the number of team members, in each category. However, long discussions dealing with all concerns ensured they were overcome. Classifiers were committed to delivering a fair and equitable process. Teams content to be recognised as an International USAR Team and being able to wear the INSARAG patch do so with a tremendous sense of achievement and pride.

There is little doubt that the IEC/R system has revolutionised the whole international USAR operations and its readiness for Teams to respond in a professional and competent manner, without imposing additional burdens on host countries, knowing they will receive the very best professional standards. As for the future, there is always more work to do to improve quicker accessibility to countries, forging closer partnerships, and using mutual assistance arrangements. Together with exploring the potential use of Drones and AI, in pursuit of excellence.

EDWARD G. PEARN,

Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire,
Queen's Fire Service Medal, former HM Inspector of Fire
Services for England & Wales,
UKSART Team Leader/UK Coordinator. art
of INSARAG Network, 1992 / 2019

STRENGTHENING THE IEC/R SYSTEM: ENHANCING STANDARDS, LEADERSHIP, AND GLOBAL DISASTER RESPONSE



The IEC process was established to provide an objective, peer review of a team's international USAR response capability. Before its implementation, USAR teams conducted self-assessments, categorizing themselves as light, medium, or heavy USAR teams based on the INSARAG Guidelines and reported their self-appointed status to the INSARAG Secretariat. However, these self-assessments were subjective and inconsistently applied, as was observed during several major international USAR deployments in the late 1990s and early 2000s. To address this issue, the concept of the IEC was proposed in 2005, which received unanimous support, and thus the IEC process was born.

The Hungarian USAR team volunteered to be the first to undergo a classification, and when we gathered in Budapest to conduct this inaugural classification, none of us could have anticipated the profound impact the IEC process would have—not only within the INSARAG network but, as time has shown, across the United Nations and the broader humanitarian community. From the IEC process, the need for the IER was recognised, and this component was subsequently introduced. The IEC/R process supersedes the Checklist or the “patch”. It is a system that has garnered international recognition as a global benchmark, conveying a message of adherence to the INSARAG Guidelines, consistent application of universally agreed standards, transcending language and culture.

To strengthen the IEC/R system, the requirement to have a Mentor was made mandatory in 2011. The system was further enhanced by the introduction of the IEC/R Leadership Course, which was introduced in 2012. Participation in this course is now a mandatory requirement for IEC/R Team Leaders, Mentors and Secretariat Representatives. By providing structured training on evaluation standards, decision-making, and coordination, the course strengthens the integrity of the IEC/R system and enhances global disaster response capabilities. It aids in fostering a standardized approach to classifying USAR teams, ensuring consistency and reliability in assessing operational readiness, ultimately reinforcing INSARAG's commitment to maintaining high standards in humanitarian response.

At its core, the IEC/R system is about saving the lives that cannot be saved by anyone else. Rescue is a patient driven activity, and for those who are deeply trapped in collapsed structures, USAR is their final hope. It is therefore incumbent upon us, the INSARAG community, to ensure we respond safely, efficiently and effectively, with professionalism and respect. The IEC/R process, along with the dedicated individuals who uphold it, embodies this lifesaving mission.

TREVOR GLASS

has been with INSARAG since 2003, founding the Medical Working Group (2007), co-developing the IEC/R Leadership Course (2012).

Contributing author of the INSARAG Guidelines, multiple Technical Reference Notes, as well as numerous other INSARAG documents. Serving as a mentor and IEC/R Team Leader Classifier

THE CHALLENGES OF ESTABLISHING INTERNATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS



As of the publication of this article, 58 USAR teams are classified according to the INSARAG quality standards. While the INSARAG External Classification is now recognized as the global benchmark for ensuring compliance with INSARAG Guidelines, its early development demanded considerable effort to establish universally accepted minimum standards and a suitable evaluation process. The introduction of the USAR Classification System was crucial because many early teams, despite their good intentions, lacked the necessary expertise for effective and safe USAR operations, not only endangering their own personnel and the victims but also placing additional strain on local authorities and resources.

INSARAG operates as a global network where consensus is key. Recommendations are endorsed by the Steering Committee once agreed upon by the Regional Groups, rather than being imposed by executive power. A key challenge in agreeing on quality criteria was the diversity of practices across countries, shaped by cultural and regional differences. International standards depend on finding a workable consensus rather than dictating the "best" method. Another challenge was that some countries resisted the idea of allowing international experts to evaluate domestic teams. The breakthrough came only after years of careful consideration of diverse views and thorough examination of best practice and innovative ideas, resulting not only in accepted minimum standards but also a peer-to-peer process for coaching the preparation of teams to ensure compliance and avoid failure in the evaluation. The one-week classification exercise is very demanding, verifying that the team can mobilize quickly, operate efficiently and safely, and collaborate with local authorities and other humanitarian actors. The IEC, launched in 2005, saw its first successful classification with the Hungarian USAR Team, setting the stage for continued success in the global rollout.

THOMAS PETER

Head of Coordination Platforms Unit, manages Virtual OSOCC, acts as GDACS Secretariat and coordinates the organization of HNPW.

He joined OCHA in 1995, held various roles in coordination, training, and led several UNDAC missions. He developed the Virtual OSOCC platform in 1998, contributed to INSARAG's growth, and led the OCHA's Emergency Relief Coordination Centre (2008-2018)

THE IEC/R SYSTEM WORKED!

Congratulations to INSARAG and the flagship “gold standard” IEC/R system!

The INSARAG network agreed in 2005, 15 years after its establishment, to have fellow USAR experts come and tell them after a 36-hour full scale exercise, if the team meets the standards of the INSARAG Guidelines. The initial scepticism of some teams soon turned into a beeline of such teams wanting to be acknowledged and recognised as a team that can bring added value to strengthen the coordination and effectiveness of international USAR assistance.

The IEC exercise is never a walk in the park, it's a lot of sweat and this saves lives - nearly 90% of INSARAG classified teams responded to the Türkiye earthquake on 6 February 2023, operated self-sufficiently, coordinated in accordance with globally accepted methodology - saving 300 lives. The largest show of global solidarity from the network demonstrated one thing- that the INSARAG System WORKED!

The quantifiable, verifiable peer process created by INSARAG for INSARAG is reaching maturity, a lot is still being done through cross fertilisation of best practices, leveraging new technologies and strengthening partnerships. With the same passion of the pioneer members- that the victim is front and center in all we do – INSARAG will rise to new heights.



WINSTON CHANG

Former INSARAG Global Lead and Secretariat,
OCHA Geneva (2007–2024)

Instrumental in making INSARAG a cornerstone
of international disaster response,
expanding it from 2 to 58 classified teams

A Team Leaders' meeting with USAR Liaisons
(Winston Chang and Sam Orr),
facilitated and worked closely with the UC
Manager(s) in the OSOCC/UCC during
the Nepal earthquakes in 2015.



Chapter II.: IEC Milestones

"The INSARAG Network grew quickly in its early years, doubling in size nearly every year. Hungary's HUN-01 was the first to undergo an IEC in 2005. A year later, in 2006, USA-01 became the first team in the Americas – and the third globally – to achieve a Heavy IEC classification. By 2008, the Asia-Pacific region also had its first Heavy USAR team with SGP-01 Singapore. The network continued to expand with NGO teams, and the first Medium and Light USAR teams joined the community as well. This chapter is dedicated to telling the story of those who led the way – **the ones who came first.**"

TWO DECADES OF EVOLUTION IN PRACTICE: HUNGARY'S JOURNEY



"It feels like time has passed in the blink of an eye; nearly twenty years ago, Hungary made the decision to be the first to undergo an IEC. Back then, there was no set guideline or checklist, just a shared dedication, expertise, and a strong INSARAG network focused on ensuring quality – a mission that continues to this day."

Over the past 20 years, I have worked with new colleagues and trained many young people. It has been an eternal challenge, the change of generations, both in terms of personnel and technical equipment. Today, we use different rope technology equipment and methods. We support the work of the team leader with modern e-data collection and processing. We have faced new and increasing expectations, manufacturer standards, and higher safety requirements. More modern search and rescue equipment helps our work.

As a team leader, I have always met the triple challenge of ensuring the financial, legal, and human resources background for the team to operate. The commander's tasks were to motivate the team members and keep young and senior experts.

I wrote numerous reports and accounts to provide additional resources and a central source for the purchase of new tools and equipment. Due to the changing environment and new natural and civilizational challenges, legal framework had to be revised. A generational change occurred, the 8th generation started working, expectations got higher, and the future's challenge is enormous. The administration and coordination tasks are getting bigger. The number of the staff in management is growing dynamically, instead of the previous 3 people, 23 people are now performing the increased tasks.

I am waiting for the appearance of artificial intelligence and autonomous self-operating equipment, with which we will make labour more efficient: drones for aerial assessment, building scanners, K9 robots, applications with smart software.

COL. PÉTER JACKOVICS, PHD.

HUN-01 Team Leader and UNDAC member, Head of the Department for Emergency Response in MoI NDGDM of Hungary. Deployed in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Haiti, Malta, Serbia, Japan, Ukraine and Türkiye

BRINGING HOPE THROUGH RESCUE FOR 30 YEARS: REFLECTIONS

"Since the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma, the calling has been clear: to rescue those who seem unreachable, trapped in the darkness beneath the rubble. It is both an honour and a privilege to serve as the Program Manager for Fairfax County Urban Search & Rescue, known as Virginia Task Force 1 and USA-01 (VA-TF1/USA-01)"



In December 1988, following a 6.9 magnitude earthquake, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue responded to the disaster in Armenia, USSR. This response was conducted under the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), now the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/ Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). Since then, VA-TF1/USA-01 has deployed on 179 missions, both domestically (FEMA) and internationally (USAID/BHA). We have played an instrumental role in assisting with the development of the INSARAG, which has established the global standard for international USAR teams. This approach has proven to increase efficiency both domestically and internationally, ultimately serving and saving more lives.

Each of us has a voice—and though it may sometimes seem small or insignificant, it is powerful. Our work is a constant reminder of the important message we carry wherever our boots may land, we bring the message of hope. We must use our experiences to motivate, educate, mentor, and train all USAR teams who aspire to be prepared. We play a critical role in humanity, and with every great opportunity to bring hope comes great sacrifice and dedication. However, the reward is priceless.

ROBERT SCHOENBERGER

He has served with the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department for 22 years and has been part of VA-TF1/USA-01 for over 17 years.
He has served as certified paramedic for over 25 years.
Completing 18 deployments, both domestically and internationally,
in addition to 15 global training missions.



MENTORSHIP ROLE

To ensure quality assurance in Preparedness and Response, INSARAG introduced in 2005 the IEC/R system. The unique quality assurance IEC/R process is described in the INSARAG Guidelines, Volume II, Manual C (INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification) and reviewed and adapted every five years within the Guidelines Review Process. The same goes for the five-year IEC/R cycle that is essential to ensure that USAR Teams remain prepared for international deployments, as daily operations differ significantly from large-scale disaster response, personnel rotations require continuous training, new equipment must be integrated effectively, and updates to INSARAG Guidelines and minimal standards must be implemented to maintain operational excellence.

Quality Assurance does not stop with the USAR Teams; it starts with the quality of the Mentors and the IEC/R Cadre. To support the USAR Team in the process of IEC/R, the ISG endorsed that it is compulsory for USAR Teams to engage a Mentor that does not come from the organisation undertaking an IEC/R. This will open opportunities of learning from a different perspective as well as expanding knowledge of how other USAR Teams operate (peer to peer). The role of the Mentor is to “coach” the team with regard to its preparation over the entire two year IEC/R process; from application, planning, preparation to the conduct of the IEC/R exercise and if needed well beyond.

Although the USAR Team being classified is responsible for the process of their own IEC/R, the Mentor has a crucial contribution to the successful IEC/R. Together with the USAR Team, s/he must identify the gaps and challenges of the USAR Team and map together the way ahead for the required corrective actions within the given timeline – if possible, with hands on trainings and workshops. The mentor must also be able to advise the EXCON on how to plan, prepare and conduct the 36-hours IEC/R exercise, so that the IEC/R Cadre can classify the USAR Team according to the minimal standards set in the IEC/R Checklist.

The Mentor can only fulfill these tasks if s/he knows the team and enjoys full trust. Most critical is their task to decide, together with the USAR Team, in an independent and unbiased manner, to advise to the INSARAG Secretariat whether the USAR Team is ready for a successful IEC/R exercise or whether the exercise needs to be postponed. This is where the basis of trust between the Mentor and the USAR Team becomes apparent.



ANNIKA COLL ERIKSSON

Fire Officer of Bomberos Comunidad de Madrid
Team Focal Point and Team Leader of ERICAM (ESP-01)
Operational Focal Point of Spain, Quality Assurance IEC/R Working Group Co-Chair
Has been active in the INSARAG network since 2008 in meetings, trainings and exercises, as well as in IEC/Rs as classifier and mentor
International USAR responses: Haiti (2010), Chile (2010), Türkiye (2023), Morocco (2023)

DAVID SOCHOR

Chief of Rapid Response and Early Recovery at the Swiss
Humanitarian Aid for twelve years,
Quality Assurance IEC/R Working Group Co-Chair





UK ISAR: THE FIRST GLOBALLY RECLASSIFIED USAR TEAM

Over the past three decades, UK ISAR has established itself as the premier international search and rescue team, and official UK Government response through the EDT2 on behalf of and funded by the FCDO.

UK ISAR is renowned for its expertise, dedication, and unwavering commitment to saving lives in the most challenging situations and its speed to deploy across the globe and ready to mobilise within a 6–10-hour time window from a designated national point of departure. The ability to do this has been honed over the last 30 years.

I am immensely proud to be the UK ISAR National Coordinator and to lead on behalf of the lead authority, representing UK Government Internationally within INSARAG, working closely with the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service principal officer team, national resilience and with the dedicated service leads through their appointed coordinators.

“This team is like no other and it’s a real honour to have spent over twenty years involved at every level within the UK ISAR and INSARAG family.”

UK ISAR has maintained a very proactive team in the INSARAG family with a number of our UK coordinators involved in the development of both IEC and IER processes. As the UK ISAR team we are very confident in the IER system and its ever progressing standard. UK ISAR in 2009 wanted to demonstrate the effectiveness and ability of the team as well as support the INSARAG developing objectives. From conversations with the giants that came before us the whole approach was to test ourselves against the UN standard and blaze a trail for others to follow. Mr. Peter Crook, the National Coordinator and an active Working Group member at that time in 2009 set out his stall to support the Network and build upon being one first teams to take part in the original IEC system after Hungary. It was a further level of drive supported by UK Government to complete the IER within just three years and aligned to the national efforts also being developed hand in hand with the commitment to International response aligned to UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150.

As a technician within the team during 2009 and just setting foot on the INSARAG foundation and journey, it was clear to me then and certainly now as the current UK ISAR Team leader and National operational focal point that INSARAG has ensured that the UK ISAR team was pushed hard to become and be known as a premier team importantly giving all teams the opportunity to share learning, best practise and development from peer to peer review. The INSARAG network during 2009 shared the vision for a team on its first run to achieve great things.

RUSS GAUDEN

UK ISAR National Coordinator, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
UK Operational Focal point INSARAG.

Fire officer for 29 years and UK ISAR for 23 years. Deployments: Haiti, Japan, Bosnia, Greece, Malawi, Morocco. Gold command. Pakistan, Indonesia, New Zealand, Türkiye
INSARAG WG Flexible response and Co-Chair of Search and Rescue
in Flood Response Working Group

PUI - THE FIRST GLOBALLY CLASSIFIED NGO USAR TEAM

With a career dedicated to emergency management and humanitarian assistance, I have gained extensive experience through both domestic and international interventions. Awarded the Legion of Honor for my contributions, I have been actively involved in crisis management for decades. My passion for rescue operations led me to participate in major humanitarian missions in the 1990s, reinforcing the necessity of global cooperation in disaster response. This vision materialized in 2004 when I co-founded PUI, a volunteer-driven organization committed to providing rapid and effective emergency relief worldwide.

One of the key milestones in this journey was PUI's INSARAG recognition, a crucial achievement proving that an NGO could meet the rigorous international USAR standards. PUI was the first USAR team to be classified by INSARAG in 2010 in France. Since then, FRA-01 has been deployed to major disasters, from the Haiti earthquake to the Türkiye earthquake in 2023, showcasing our operational excellence. Beyond field interventions, I have emphasized training, innovation, and international cooperation, ensuring that PUI remains at the forefront of emergency response. My active participation in INSARAG activities, international forums, and European projects has strengthened the role of NGOs in crisis management. Looking forward, I continue to advocate for technological advancements, enhanced coordination, and the expansion of NGO contributions to global humanitarian efforts.

PHILIPPE BESSON

retired Lieutenant-Colonel of professional firefighters,
founder and president of PUI Pompiers de l'urgence internationale (FRA-01)



THE GLOBAL CLASSIFICATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TEAMS: TEN YEARS INTO A PARADIGM SHIFT



DR. FLAVIO SALIO

leads the EMT Network at WHO Geneva, overseeing strategy, standards, and emergency health operations. With 20+ years of experience, he has led health programs and emergency responses across various crises worldwide

Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) are groups of health professionals that provide direct clinical care to patients and communities affected by natural disasters, conflict, disease outbreaks or other health emergencies. They are categorized based on the complexity and type of care provided. EMTs deploy equipped, trained and fully self-sufficient so as not to burden an already strained system. They work under internationally agreed guiding principles, core and technical standards that translate and operationalize their commitment to the pursuit of quality of care and professionalism, and form the basis of the Global Classification.

The catastrophic earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 highlighted the need for better coordination between

teams. Lives that could have been saved were lost, creating a burning platform for change. In December 2010, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) convened a meeting in Cuba to discuss the response, which then led to the convening of a working group to establishing minimum standards and a quality assurance system for medical teams.

Despite initial skepticism, WHO issued the first-ever Classification and Minimum Standards for Emergency Medical Teams in 2013. This marked a paradigm shift: proving that standards and a common typology are applicable to medical emergency response. Six months later, during the super-typhoon Haiyan in the

Since its inception, the number of EMTs with Global Classification status has steadily and tangibly increased. By the publication date (March 2025), there were 53 internationally classified teams representing 62 capacities from 32 countries across all WHO regions. This is over halfway to the EMT 2030 strategy target of 100 classified teams worldwide. The 5-year reclassification process is also underway, while national validation will commence in 2025.



Philippines; these standards and typology were used for the first time and proved effective.

In July 2015, WHO launched the Global Classification, a peer-review external evaluation mechanism that assesses EMT compliance with published guiding principles

Global reach of EMT Classification



Countries with at least one classified EMT. Australia, Barbados, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dom Rep, Ecuador, Fiji, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kingdom Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia Federation, Senegal, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, USA, United Kingdom. (Graph doesn't show number of teams per country). Image generated via AI.

and standards. The process consists of a self-assessment, mentorship, preparatory site visits and the final certification visit, and focuses mostly on EMT teams aiming to deploy internationally. Since its inception and until the publication of this book (March 2025), 53 teams from across the world have successfully achieved Classification, and over one hundred are in the process. Five years after the “Classification”, EMTs must demonstrate continued compliance with standards and implement changes based on learnings from deployments and simulation exercises. This continuous improvement approach defines the reclassification cycle of the Global Classification and was designed with efficiency



in mind, while safeguarding the reliability of the entire process. It consists of a desktop documentary review and a site visit. In February 2023, the reclassification was tested during the deployment of EMTs to the Türkiye earthquake, demonstrating that quality assurance visits can be conducted during deployment without impacting patient care. By the end of February 2025, 13 EMT teams have been reclassified, including 4 during deployment.

The Global Classification has brought a uniform language and common terminology that allows for smoother requests for assistance and coordination upon deployments. The capacities and capabilities of the teams are known in advance, as are their requirements. Common terminology, alongside standardization and training, is one of the benefits of the Global Classification. More importantly, it is a key factor in building interoperability and strengthening response.

The achievements of the past decade are tangible, as are the challenges. At an operational level, there is not a widespread culture of documenting how processes are executed, which hinders the progress

Japan Disaster Relief Medical Team responding to the Türkiye earthquake in 2023. (c) JDR



of many teams, particularly in support and logistics functions. At a more strategic level, there is still room for greater awareness about the benefits of investing in Global Classification and ensuring its long-term sustainability. The argument that it improves quality of care upon deployment to another country is straightforward, but the internal benefits are less so. Classified EMTs are not only valuable as response assets, but also play a key role in strengthening health systems.

Professionals who are part of a Classified EMT gain transferable knowledge, skills and experience that enhance their day-to-day work, ultimately contributing to the overall resilience and effectiveness of healthcare services.

Building on the success of the Global Classification and the understanding that quality of care is crucial in crises, the EMT Initiative is introducing a quality assurance mechanism for national teams. These teams, whether government-led or non-governmental, primarily operate domestically. This new initiative aims to adapt minimum standards to local contexts without compromising the quality of care, marking another paradigm shift: that a quality assured EMT is within the reach of every country. This is best summarized by the ambitious challenge and goal launched at the recent sixth Emergency Medical Teams Global Meeting:

Every country able to respond rapidly, effectively, and flexibly to national health emergencies.

Every need for life-saving and essential health care met with timely and quality services.

Everyone better protected from health emergencies.



PROFESSOR LEN NOTARAS, AO

Executive Director National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC)

Founded Australia's NCCTRC in 2005, led AUSMAT, and held key health leadership roles. He now chairs ACHS and serves on the ACHSM board.

"I am proud to have championed the imperatives of safety and quality in healthcare throughout my career. Witnessing the direct impact of this commitment on clinical outcomes – both for patients and the communities we serve – has been profoundly rewarding.

From its inception, the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) has embraced the innovative vision of developing a typology and minimum standards for medical teams responding to crises. The Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT) was one of the early adopters of this initiative and among the first in the world to achieve 'globally classified' EMT status through the peer review process.

The EMT initiative has made, and continues to make, a profound difference in global health outcomes. While AUSMAT was already a strong team with a history of successful deployments before joining the Classification, we recognized the importance of continuous improvement. Earning the EMT classification brought great pride, but quality is not about a badge or certificate – it is a relentless pursuit of excellence in serving populations at their time of greatest need."



THE FIRST GLOBALLY CLASSIFIED LIGHT USAR TEAM

In 2021, @fire – International Disaster Response Germany became the first Light USAR Team to complete the IEC, marking a milestone in the evolution of international Urban Search and Rescue. The journey presented challenges, as an internally proven operational model had to be aligned with the newly established INSARAG Guidelines of 2020. Adapting the equipment to remain under two tonnes while ensuring full operational capability demanded innovative solutions, particularly in shelter, logistics, and technical rescue tools. The classification process itself, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, added further complexity, requiring additional health and safety measures.



During the work in the INSARAG Light Team Working Group from 2015 until 2020 the light standard was developed, ensuring that it can be an effective, deployable solution for disaster response worldwide. The Light USAR Team can fill a gap below Medium and Heavy USAR Teams, providing a highly mobile and flexible response option, especially valuable in affected countries with challenging infrastructure.

The success of a Light USAR team depends on the extensive cross-training of its 20 members (see graphic), ensuring adaptability in dynamic field conditions. While not mandatory for a Light USAR Team, the experiences confirmed that search dogs (K9) remain one of the most effective tools for rapid victim location. This was proven during the mission to Kahramanmaraş Türkiye in 2023, where K9 units from @fire were able to locate multiple persons under the rubble. In good cooperation with

local and international teams five persons could be rescued by the Light USAR Team. Parallel to search and rescue the coordination was supported in the RDC and SCC. To meet flexible challenges, most team members have two to three qualifications, one usually being "rescue".

Classifications are a logistical challenge for Light USAR Teams. In the 36-hour classification timeframe the Light USAR model's shift structure (with one rest period) effectively allows only 24 hours to fulfill the IEC checklist. A recommendation is to conduct joint classifications with other teams to facilitate realism in the coordination and cooperation. A good network within the INSARAG family was of immense value to @fire during the entire IEC process, resulting in the new Team ID GER-03 after the successful classification.



DIPL.-ING.(FH) JOHANNES GUST, M.SC.

an Engineer specializing in Hazmat/Industrial Safety, has been involved in civil defense in Germany since 1998, has worked in USAR since 2003, former member of the INSARAG Light Team Working Group

USAR Team Management		4
1 x	Team Leader	
1 x	Deputy Team Leader / Operations Manager	
1 x	Planning and Information Manager	
1x	Liaison (UCC/SCC/RDC Staff)	
Field Operations		14
1 x	USAR Engineer	
1 x	Safety / Rescue Technician	2
Search		4
1 x	Search Squad Leader	
3 x	K9 Handler / Search Technician	
Rescue		6
1 x	Rescue Squad Leader	
5 x	Rescue Technician	
Medical		2
2 x	Paramedic / Rescue Technician	
BoO		2
1 x	Logistics Manager	
1 x	Logistics Support / Rescue Technician	
Light USAR Team		20
Total personnel: 20		
+3 dogs		
@fire		



THE LASTING IMPACT OF NATIONAL USAR ACCREDITATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The INSARAG External Classification has been a success story that has proven its value over time. Its biggest test was the 2023 response to Türkiye and Syria, which saved over 300 lives. This represents the unique collaborative and sustained work of an extensive network of member states and practitioners who have identified best international practices and set minimum standards for international USAR Teams.

Leveraging its extensive knowledge and experience of the IEC/R while addressing the significant challenge of localising the response and building national USAR capacity, INSARAG adopted the National Accreditation Process (NAP) in 2015. Subsequently, in 2017, the INSARAG Recognized National Accreditation (IRNAP) process was endorsed. Nine member states have embraced the IRNAP concept, with many more in progress.

Member states are encouraged to adopt this methodology as part of their national USAR framework and as a fundamental instrument for quality assurance and closing the gap between international and national USAR capacity.

The legacy of the IEC/R process extends far beyond international response, as it has significantly contributed to guiding and establishing national USAR standards.

SEBASTIAN MOCARQUER

USAR Bomberos de Chile (CHI-01), INSARAG National Capacity Building Working Group Co-chair, IEC/R Team Leader and Mentor

EU MODEX: A GAME-CHANGER FOR USAR TEAMS INSARAG RECLASSIFICATION

For the USAR teams preparing for INSARAG Reclassification, the EU MODEX platform offers an excellent alternative to traditional, home-country-based exercises. Conducted within the framework of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), EU MODEX delivers a highly realistic deployment experience beyond a team's usual operational environment. This approach not only enhances the authenticity of the exercise but also allows teams to showcase their full capabilities - from mobilization to demobilization - under close to real disaster conditions. Designed and executed by an EU-contracted consortium, the exercise minimizes planning burdens, optimizing both time and resources. Furthermore, EU MODEX always builds on the most recent deployments to best replicate the unique emergency scenarios and to challenge the participating teams. Direct collaboration with UN OCHA in scenario development and exercise conduction, along with the opportunity to cooperate and interact with multiple teams, modules, and international stakeholders and coordination structures (e.g. UCC), enhances essential cooperation and strengthens interoperability for effective disaster response.

EU MODEX aligns fully with INSARAG Guidelines and provides a platform that supports the comprehensive IEC/R checklist within a 42-hour operational window, enhancing both flexibility and opportunities for successful reclassification. To support the process, the [Guidance for IER in EU MODEX](#) was launched in 2020, as a result of the collaborative effort between the DG-ECHO and INSARAG Secretariat, which functions as a reference tool to reinforce a common understanding among the many key stakeholders involved in the development, and delivery of the IEC/R process utilising the EU MODEX platform. The exercise's long-standing credibility and proven track record in delivering high-quality civil protection training make it an attractive choice for teams aiming to achieve in the future INSARAG classification or reclassification. By engaging with the EU MODEX consortium early in the planning

process and maintaining proactive communication, teams can address any logistical challenges and ensure the exercise aligns with their specific needs. Although the process involves some complexities or limitations, such as totally independent exercise coordination system, the extended operational duration or the eligibility limited to Europe and neighbourhood, the benefits of participating in this widely recognized platform far outweigh the potential challenges, offering a more effective, efficient, and productive reclassification process. IER in EU MODEX by the numbers: The first IER was conducted in 2014, when MUSAR Iceland participated in the EU MODEX in Denmark. Since then, 12 teams - 6 MUSAR and 6 HUSAR - have successfully completed their IERs within the EU MODEX framework. DG ECHO and the INSARAG Secretariat continue to closely collaborate to raise awareness among classified USAR teams about the opportunity to undertake IER in EU MODEX.

**MARCIN KEDRA AND
VLAD PETRE**

EU MODEX Desk officers / DG ECHO





Chapter III.: Introducing the 2025 INSARAG Family on the Occasion of the IEC/R 20th Anniversary

2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025



HUN-01 HUNGARY "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 80 personnel, and 3 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date 6

● Türkiye (1999) ● Sri Lanka (2004) ● Indonesia (2009) ● Haiti (2010) ● Serbia (2014) ● Türkiye (2023)

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

At first, we are honoured and delighted that our country could be the first in the world to achieve IEC. Working in a team has always been challenging, especially when you are working in a team where the goal is to save lives in their hour of need. Even during the earthquake in Türkiye, we took it in turns to rescue the injured from the rubble, almost racing against the clock. The extensive damage was a significantly demanding task, which demanded a great deal from all members of the team, both personally and professionally. Arriving to the damaged area, our team searched for survivors in continuous rotation, 24 hours a day, without stopping. Despite the frequent and strong aftershocks, we worked continuously on the collapsed buildings. Thanks to the work of the HUNOR staff over the past years and their good preparation, they worked tirelessly, and our professionals earned the appreciation of the locals for their rescue work.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

For us, the biggest and most recent achievement at the moment is completing our third IER and being part of a constantly evolving network. Of course, our biggest intervention and achievement is the deployment to Türkiye, which gave our team a lot of professional experience. The time spent there was not only a professional but also a personal development opportunity for our team members. The knowledge gained there will contribute greatly to the present and future of HUNOR. What we saw there has been largely incorporated into our team's training materials and situational awareness. It is important to mention that since the end of 2011, HUNOR has been named in the implementing decree of the Disaster Management Act as the official rescue team of the country in international disaster relief.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our view, the greatest achievement of the INSARAG network is its ability to command and deploy troops from anywhere in the world, ready to deploy at a moment's notice, according to a harmonised set of procedures. We are all here for a common purpose.



THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Our dynamically evolving world is presenting INSARAG members around the world with many new technical challenges. We believe that the challenges of the future will equip existing members with a wealth of technical and informal knowledge and will encourage more participants to join INSARAG. We believe it is important to train and prepare the next generation for a brighter future.



MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

The future is in the hands of young people, so we have a shared responsibility to build a community where the older generation can help young people develop and have the opportunity to fight together.

Facts and Figures Update

Year of IEC classification: 2006

Current Full Capacity: 80 personnel and 6 K9

Total number of international USAR deployments to date: 20+

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

Recognition of need for flexible response program supporting the facts of climate change and INSARAG's commitment to change to do the most for the most, using 30 years of experience to move in addition to USAR into new areas of emergency such as floods, while maintaining a standard that is achievable for all.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

We consider our 3 deployments to Türkiye, Malawi and Morocco in 2023 as our greatest achievement. Alongside this, we completed our 3rd IER in Switzerland in very cold weather conditions.

Became a Known Consignor for movement of the UK ISAR Cache. Other team recognising UK ISAR best practice and implementing UK ISAR procedures for their teams (an example is removal of dangerous goods from cache).

We are especially proud of having UK ISAR team members supporting all INSARAG working groups, secondly, flood response and USAR capacity building in African regions.



THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Building on its current success with more focus on areas on capacity building programs to support regions without resources or expertise.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

Set the standard and raise the bar of challenge, highlighting the importance of the non-biased approach to the evidence and information presented, INSARAG has to adapt, improvise, develop using innovation and IT while maintaining and developing the levels of recognised standard. Use the evidence based approach to improve at every opportunity and provide innovation.



GBR-01-UNITED KINGDOM "HEAVY"

USA-01 UNITED STATES "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 80 personnel and 6 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 52

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Most significant challenges for us were: Membership and deployments during COVID. To overcome this we adjusted our methods of mobilization, deployment, sleeping accommodations, community tents, and safe hygiene practices at the Base of Operations. Training was changed to be unit- and discipline-based, rather than team-based, for the past 18 months.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

Since 1986 we have had the ability to support over 170 domestic and international missions and certified with INSARAG as a Heavy, 3 times. We are especially proud of mentoring and assisting with numerous IEC/R's.

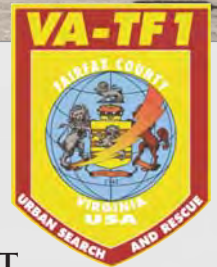


GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

We now have 58 INSARAG Classified Teams.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

We need to focus on the 58 classified teams to ensure they remain capable. Our mentorship process should confirm that those who are about to be classified are truly qualified and capable, at least 24 months in advance.



MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

The INSARAG Classification is just the beginning. You must give back to the system you are now a part of. This is the minimum qualification. We must all strive to perfect our knowledge, skills, and equipment, while looking to the future to exceed our current expectations. Lastly, if we do not follow the INSARAG Guidelines during the emergency to which we are deployed, we will miss the opportunity to do greater good.



USA-02 UNITED STATES "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 79 personnel and 6 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date: 6 (Haiti, New Zealand, Japan, Nepal, Mexico, Türkiye)

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

One of the most significant challenges USA-02 has faced since obtaining IEC classification is attrition due to retirements within the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Over the past few years, our team has experienced a considerable shift in personnel, as many of the original members who were part of the initial classification in 2007 have since retired. This turnover has required ongoing efforts to recruit, train, and develop new team members to maintain the high standards and operational readiness expected of an IEC-classified team.

We addressed this challenge through aggressive recruitment, hiring, and training efforts within the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a highly skilled team, we have maintained a strong, ongoing commitment to USAR training to replace retiring members and ensure continuity of expertise. By prioritizing the development of highly trained and qualified personnel, we have been able to sustain the operational effectiveness of USA-02 and uphold our readiness for international deployments.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

One of the most significant accomplishments in USA-02's history was our rapid response to the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami. Our team members had just returned home from the Christchurch earthquake response and, within approximately 24 hours, were redeployed using our secondary USAR cache of equipment. Despite the quick turnaround, there was no delay in our response, and the team was able to perform at the highest level, demonstrating exceptional readiness, resilience, and commitment to international disaster response.

One of our most notable innovations is the implementation of electronic data collection to enhance disaster response operations. The ability to gather and share real-time information on affected areas has significantly improved coordination within the INSARAG network. During the Türkiye response, USA-02 utilized ICMS and the Search and Rescue Cooperative Platform (SARCOP) to provide real-time search data and structural damage assessments to local Turkish government agencies. This electronic mapping and data collection system greatly enhanced our operational effectiveness, improved situational awareness, and strengthened collaboration within the INSARAG system.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

One of the most significant achievements of the INSARAG community is the development of internationally recognized USAR guidelines. These guidelines ensure that all teams operating under the INSARAG framework are trained, equipped, and prepared to respond efficiently and cohesively to disasters worldwide. By requiring every team that wears the INSARAG patch to meet these rigorous benchmarks, the system enhances operational effectiveness, promotes seamless coordination, and ultimately improves outcomes for affected countries. More than just a framework, INSARAG represents a global family of USAR professionals dedicated to supporting one another and providing critical aid to communities in need.





THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, the INSARAG Network will be even stronger, driven by continuous innovation, advanced training, and enhanced cooperation among member countries. As technology evolves, real-time data sharing, artificial intelligence, and remote sensing tools will further improve disaster response capabilities. Increased knowledge sharing and collaboration will elevate the preparedness and effectiveness of every USAR team, ensuring a more coordinated and efficient global response to disasters. The INSARAG community will continue to set the benchmark for international search and rescue operations, reinforcing its role as a vital network of highly skilled professionals committed to saving lives.

Building global partnerships and fostering strong relationships within the INSARAG network is critical to the success of future USAR teams. Whether through IEC/R events, joint training exercises, or international deployments, investing in these connections enhances collaboration and operational effectiveness. The ability to ask, „How are you” instead of „Who are you” in the field



fosters trust, reduces stress, and strengthens teamwork during disaster response. Above all, remember that teamwork is the foundation of success—no single team can do it alone. By working together, sharing knowledge, and supporting one another, we can continue to improve our collective ability to respond to major disasters and save lives.

NED-01 NETHERLANDS "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 63 personnel and 8 rescue dogs
Total number of international
USAR deployments to date:
7 deployments in total: Morocco (2004), Pakistan (2005),
Haiti (2010), Nepal (2015), St. Martin (2017),
Lebanon (2020), Türkiye (2023).

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Our most significant challenge is keeping the existence of the team out of any political discussion. We overcame this challenge by invading that we are a humanitarian asset that can be used to the benefit of our country's international image and by proving that we are a trustworthy organisation.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

Our most significant accomplishment is our deployment in 2023 in Türkiye. The devastation was so big that it



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xH32SVnurA&pp=ygUObmlldXdzdXVzYXl%3D (deployment in 2023 in Türkiye)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNs8jO_0jQ (Our 20 years anniversary)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wl9oVevdQDo> (A rescue in Türkiye)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FI_dlyOpj0 (Our deployment in St. Martin after hurricane Irma)



<https://www.bnnvara.nl/tags/oranje-helmen-in-turkije> (A documentary about our team in Türkiye during the deployment)



was hard to know where to start and where to end. We are especially proud of our Türkiye deployment where we managed the UCC and this can be considered a best practice.

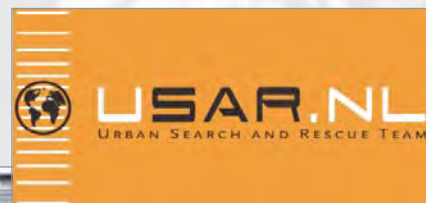
GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The most significant milestone for the INSARAG community is the deployment in Türkiye - the power of the network and the added value it brought to the victims.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Hopefully we will see an increase in the number of classified teams and a development towards more earthquake prevention and preparation for earthquake-prone countries in the next 20 years.

The message we would like to share with the next generation of USAR-teams is: Overcome your individual differences, cooperate, and keep politics out of the discussions.



GER-01 GERMANY "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 80 personnel and 8 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 19



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

As an INSARAG classified team consisting solely of voluntary members we face different challenges. While we can place most of our training outside of regular working hours, we cannot schedule missions at all. Therefore, our members have to be in constant exchange with their employers: explaining our missions and mandates, creating an understanding of our voluntary work and highlighting the value our team adds to countries and people in need. This is an ongoing process that will never be finished as team members come and go from time to time. The benefit, however, is having highly qualified staff from different professions as well as employers who see the worth of our team's work and the support our team members get from that, which is priceless.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

A significant accomplishment of THW / SEEBA would be the team's very foundation – after the devastating earthquake in Mexico in 1985 THW responded alongside many other international teams. Given the circumstances, the mission's result was impressive.

But it highlighted the need for a faster and more flexible earthquake response capacity, too. The next year, SEEBA was officially founded by order of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. Well aware of the necessity to cooperate, coordinate and network, Austria (AFDRU), Germany (THW), Switzerland (SDR) and corresponding ministries established D-A-CH, which eventually evolved to become INSARAG.

This journey illustrates the strength of organizations participating within INSARAG: learning from experiences, adapting according to needs and the determination to continuously improve.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

Establishing and developing standards throughout the community, reaching an international level in USAR operations that makes it possible to work together efficiently and effectively. Through cooperation all USAR teams learn from each other with the aim of improving the help we all provide to people in distress. Building upon that, INSARAG has provided and still does provide an organizational framework to advance humanitarian aid.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

We face new challenges due to climate change and the consequences it brings. An even wider network and close working relationships as well as being able to adapt quickly will be the future foundation of the INSARAG Network.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

Work hard, be patient and connect: Missions come at unexpected times, the best we can do is train relentlessly and work together across the INSARAG community.

GER-02 GERMANY "MEDIUM"

Medium IEC USAR team (2007), 50 Personnel
www.isar-germany.de

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

One of the most significant challenges lies in the need to uphold the high standards set by the IEC/R and maintain the team's competency, despite having to manage frequent personnel changes due to postings movements or retirement. A comprehensive approach encompassing robust succession planning and enhanced knowledge management systems needs to be in place to facilitate the prompt identification and development of suitable replacement candidates who can seamlessly integrate into the team, while maintaining the operational capabilities and expertise of the team at all times. The Singapore Civil Defense Force (SCDF) overcomes this challenge by ensuring that continuous training is conducted on a regular basis. This includes the quarterly USAR exercises which play out the entire process workflow such as activation, mobilisation reporting, equipping, briefing, Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine, LEMA and RDC/UC setup, ASR2/3/4 and demobilisation. The frequent validation of these activities provides the necessary opportunities for the transfer of specialized skills and knowledge from experienced members to newly recruited members, facilitating their assimilation into the USAR system. In terms of specialist skill sets, component-level training (e.g. USAR training for Rescue Specialists and Search Canines, USAR Coordination training for Coordination Officers, canine first-aid training and veterinary attachment, cross-training with medical doctors, etc.) is also embedded into our officers' daily routine training to ensure that these skills and competencies are constantly being practiced and refined.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

The SGP-01 has distinguished itself through a series of groundbreaking achievements, with the most significant accomplishment being its pioneering role in



the Asia-Pacific Region's USAR capabilities. In 2008, SGP-01 became the first team in the region to attain the prestigious INSARAG External Classification (IEC), set-

ting a new benchmark for USAR excellence. This landmark achievement not only demonstrated SGP-01's exceptional operational readiness and adherence to international standards, but also positioned Singapore as a leader in disaster response within the Asia-Pacific. The team's commitment to maintaining this high standard is evidenced by its successful reclassifications in 2013 and 2018, with the next reclassification scheduled for August 2025. This consistent performance over nearly two decades underscores SGP-01's enduring excellence and its pivotal role in shaping regional USAR capabilities. In addition, SGP-01's influence also extends beyond its operational achievements, as demonstrated by its hosting of the INSARAG Working Groups and

Team Leaders Meeting in 2004 and 2023, facilitating crucial knowledge exchange and collaboration in the global USAR community. The team's recent attainment of the IRNAP certifica-

SGP-01 SINGAPORE "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 80 personnel and 4 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date:
20 overseas missions



tion for its domestic medium rescue teams in 2022, another first for the region, further cements SGP-01's status as a trailblazer in the USAR fraternity.

The SGP-01 has consistently demonstrated operational excellence and innovation on the global stage. Notable deployments include the team's swift response to the 2004 Asian Tsunami, where SGP-01 mobilized two units to Aceh, Indonesia and Khao Lak, Thailand concurrently, showcasing its rapid and flexible response capabilities. More recently, the February 2023 mission to Türkiye also marked SGP-01's furthest deployment to date, underscoring the team's expanded operational reach and readiness. At the forefront of innovation, SGP-01 has also pioneered the development of wall

chart pocket sleeves for the staff aids for RDC/UCC/SCC, a concept which was subsequently adopted by several international teams. In a progressive move addressing the psychological rigors of USAR operations, SGP-01 has also integrated psychologists into its team structure in 2018 to care for the mental health of our personnel. In terms of training, Singapore has established itself as a respected knowledge hub in the USAR community, with its training facilities and courses attracting participants from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. These accomplishments collectively exemplify Singapore's commitment to excellence and innovation in the USAR community, reinforcing its position as a leader in the field.



SCDF Operation Lionheart Türkiye – Syria Earthquake
<https://publuu.com/flip-book/245173/583050/page/1>

Operation Lionheart Mission to Türkiye | 2023
<https://youtu.be/jm18qLSUhyE?si=M0v7SBA8REvwZR54>



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

Singapore opines that the most significant milestone would be the remarkable growth and expansion of its classified teams, coupled with the continuous refinement of its methodologies. From an initial two IEC teams in 2007, the INSARAG community has grown to encompass over 58 classified teams today, reflecting the global USAR community's collective commitment to standardizing and enhancing international USAR capabilities. This growth has also been complemented by the establishment of specialized working groups and the Guidelines Review Group (GRC), which have been inst-

umental in the ongoing development of INSARAG methodologies. The synergy between the expansion of classified teams and the concurrent enhancement of methodologies stands as a testament to INSARAG's success in fostering a global, standardized approach to urban search and rescue, ultimately strengthening the international community's capacity to respond effectively to disasters.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

The trajectory of the INSARAG network over the next two decades is anticipated to be one of continued growth and sustained excellence. In 20 years, we envision a significantly expanded INSARAG community, characterized by a substantial increase in the number of classified teams worldwide, while current teams continue to maintain unwavering commitment to upholding the rigorous standards set by INSARAG. In essence, the INSARAG network of 2045 is envisioned to be one of a larger, more diverse, yet equally committed and capable community of USAR teams, united in their dedication to saving lives and alleviating suffering in the aftermath of disasters worldwide.

To continue upholding INSARAG's legacy of excellence while driving innovation within the community. The next generation of USAR teams must strive to maintain rigorous standards while actively harnessing technological advancements to enhance USAR operations. They must remain committed to the continuous refinement of INSARAG guidelines and methodologies, ensuring their relevance amidst the evolving global challenges.

SUI-01 SWITZERLAND "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2008), 78 Personnel
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/activities/humanitarian-aid/operational-resources/swiss-rescue.html>

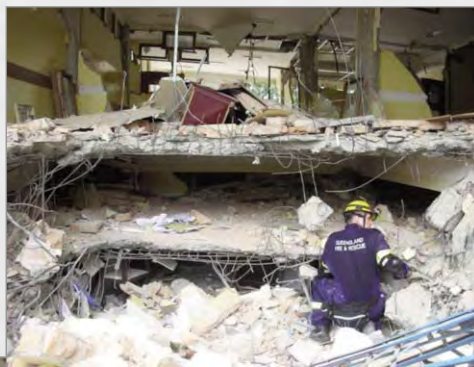


BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Living up to the standards we have imposed on ourselves, to continually evolve and improve, and most importantly, to assist others in their development both directly and indirectly. Team pride and collective ownership of that mindset by the entire team led us through it. The members know they have joined something special, and everyone needs to play their part and contribute to its success.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

Our team was among the first teams in the Asia-Pacific Region to be classified in 2008 alongside Singapore. We secured enduring Commonwealth Government funding for the USAR/DART capability and our involvement with INSARAG. We have also been mentoring other countries, including China, the USA, New Zealand, and Japan. Moreover, we successfully utilise and integrate lessons learned to improve our domestic response. Our first two international deployments post-IEC occurred simultaneously in 2009: a tsunami in Samoa, where we sent 11 personnel, and 24 hours later, an earthquake in Padang, Indonesia, where we sent 36 personnel. These deployments taught us to always be prepared and to create capacity through team depth. We are also proud of our first major international deployment, which was to the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, where we sent two heavy rotations of 75 personnel. Recent small team deployments into the Pacific Region have highlighted our ability to be flexible and adaptable and to deploy in a light team configuration in accordance with changes in the INSARAG Guidelines.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

First of all, the establishment and maintenance minimum standards for international rescue teams. The adoption and embedding of new Operational Coordination methodology, following the earthquake in Haiti, resulted in formalised coordination tools utilised by classified and non-classified teams that provide a common operating picture. This has contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of rescue operations during large scale disasters. Furthermore, the number of teams successfully classified, and the consistency of standards and operations.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

The INSARAG network is incredibly successful and has continued to expand across the decades. The quality and connectedness are as strong as ever, driven by the humanitarian principle and desire by all involved to improve the outcomes of large-scale, rapid-onset disasters.

However, to remain relevant the network will need to further embrace flexibility and technology to maintain connectedness. There is a new generation of practitioners who we are confident will take the network to the next level.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

Never rest – always strive to improve, and never forget we are there for the victims, and for the communities we respond to.

While Teams should be well prepared through systems, processes, and training, to be successful team members must have a high level of tolerance to ambiguity. When heading to a disaster, expect that nothing will go to plan and be prepared to change, be adaptable, and undertake any other roles that will help an affected community.



AUS-01-AUSTRALIA "HEAVY"

POL-01 POLAND "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 80 personnel and 8 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

We had no dedicated training area for USAR purposes. We used the military training area to train and conduct IEC/IER exercises, but over the years, the available training area shrank, and the number of buildings dwindled to a few.

By building new, dedicated training facilities at two different locations in Poland, we now have access to modern, safe training facilities that offer a variety of training options and allow us to be better prepared for operations.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

The last operation in Türkiye, where our team worked separately from other USAR teams (Besni – Adiyaman) and managed to rescue 12 people. After many years of preparation and training, the team was able to prove their skills and knowledge in



a real disaster, saving people's lives.

During the POLEX exercise (2013), hosted by USAR Poland, the concept of sectorisation and UCC/SCC was introduced and tested for the first time in history as a significant milestone in the development of the INSARAG methodology.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The introduction of the INSARAG IEC/IER system for assessing minimum standards of USAR capabilities and the promotion of the INSARAG methodology, which has become the global gold standard for urban search and rescue.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

New capacity in the IER/IEC pool, more teams from earthquake-prone countries with USAR capabilities.

Our message to the next generation of USAR teams: Join us! We are stronger together!



Current Full Capacity: 82 personnel,
and 6 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments
to Date: 10

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN HISTORY AS A TEAM

The greatest challenge is to select several team members and train them to meet the criteria of experts as mentors, IEC classifier team leaders and co-chairs of working groups, equipped with a rich experience of international deployments, a comprehensive understanding of INSARAG guidelines and methodology, fluency in using English, enthusiasm and sustainability to work for the INSARAG Network.

The Team has developed a long-term programme and has been implementing it for cultivating experts in different expertise, supporting them to work constantly within the INSARAG network and providing them with opportunities to be involved in INSARAG events and international deployments. Meanwhile, it motivates and encourages them in multiple approaches.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

As the first professional USAR team of China, established in 2001 based on the INSARAG Guidelines and Methodology, CHN-01 has been contributing to its professionalism and enthusiasm for the global humanitarian cause. The most significant accomplishment of the team is that 64 victims have been successfully rescued and more than ten thousand wounded have been treated by the team during 11 domestic and 10 international operations. The team has spread more than 10 countries and regions on 4 continents.

Additionally, we introduce the INSARAG concept and methodology into China and make it localized to promote the national USAR capacity building, especially in the professionalization and standardization of teams from the national to the municipal level and also the first responders. Thus, more lives have been rescued after different kinds of disasters.



Only 4 years after the first IEC in Hungary in 2005, CISAR successfully passed its IEC in 2009, and became the second "Heavy" classified International USAR team in Asia.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In 2002, INSARAG successfully achieved the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution, GA 57/150, on "Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance." After 3 years, the first IEC was organized for HUN-01, announcing a new era for the international USAR community.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

INSARAG will be: larger, stronger, faster, and integrated with AI technology.

To future USAR teams:

1. Be involved in INSARAG events and operations.
2. Train as hard as possible.
3. Learn how to work under the coordination system and cooperate with other teams.
4. Be flexible to response different situations.

CHN-01 CHINA "HEAVY"



UAE-01 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 89 personnel and 6 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date:
A total of 10 international deployments to date.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Our team's most significant challenge in 2023 was deploying to two countries simultaneously (Türkiye and Syria) in February and (Libya and Morocco) in September of the same year, for consecutive search and rescue operations. Furthermore, the team in Libya performed water rescue operations in addition to the USAR operations. Coordinating logistics, resources, and personnel under high-pressure conditions required adaptability and precision. Despite these challenges, our team successfully executed both missions, demonstrating our expertise, resilience, and commitment to saving lives. Despite these challenges, our team successfully executed both missions, demonstrating our expertise, resilience, and commitment to saving lives.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

1. The UAE USAR Team was the first team in the Middle East region to be classified by the INSARAG in 2009.
2. The UAE USAR Team was the first team globally to upgrade its classification from Medium to Heavy in 2013.
3. UAE USAR Team was one of the few teams granted access to conduct search & rescue operations in Syria, Morocco, and Libya in 2023.

We are proud of all our deployments, especially being part of the INSARAG Network and its life-saving mission. In 2023, deploying to two countries simultaneously was a key achievement, showcasing our adaptability and commitment to excellence. Through continuous innovation and collaboration, we uphold the highest standards in search and rescue, honouring our role in global humanitarian efforts.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

A key milestone for INSARAG is the creation of the IEC system, setting global standards for USAR teams. This system ensures teams meet international operational requirements, improving coordination and efficiency during disasters. Another major achievement is the endorsement of the INSARAG Guidelines by the UN General Assembly in 2002, reinforcing global commitment to coordinated disaster response efforts. These milestones have significantly enhanced international collaboration in life-saving operations.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, INSARAG will likely be more tech-driven, utilizing AI, coordinating drone systems, and remote sensing for faster, more efficient disaster response. The network will expand collaboration between governments, NGOs, and the private sector, focusing on climate change-related disasters and building resilience in vulnerable regions worldwide.

The UAE USAR team would emphasize the importance of collaboration and adaptability. In the face of ever-evolving challenges, being able to work seamlessly with international teams and adapt to new technologies and tactics is crucial. Additionally, focusing on continuous learning and maintaining physical and mental resilience will ensure teams are always ready for the unpredictable nature of disaster response. Lastly, compassion for those affected by disasters should always drive teamwork, reminding us that lives depend on our expertise and dedication.

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

JPN-01 JAPAN "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 74 personnel & 4 K9 units
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 21

In addition, the highly efficient portable water reuse system (WOTA BOX), manufactured by a Japanese SME, was also recognized as a remarkable technology by classifiers during the IER.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Maintaining the capacity and capability of the team despite the frequent turnover of the roster members.

We overcame this by:

- 1) Developing an annual training programme: including Comprehensive Joint Simulation Drill, Components-based Exercise and complementary maintenance workshops.
- 2) Introducing necessary documents such as Manuals, SOPs and FOG and continuously reviewing and improving them.
- 3) Disseminating all the skills, knowledge and abovementioned documents to national responders to enhance their understanding of International Standards set by INSARAG.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

All deployments followed the international standards and quality defined by INSARAG (5 deployments after IEC), particularly the deployments to Nepal and Türkiye where the JDR Rescue team played a crucial role as UCC members and Sector Coordinators.

The worksite management system using wall pockets is a particularly innovative system appraised at our IER in 2022, enabling worksite management based on ICMS, which is visually recognizable and easy to track the progress.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

1) Establishing a common language and standards for USAR operation for all teams and relevant stakeholders by introducing the INSARAG Guidelines.

2) Developing a peer-to-peer review system to provide mutual learning opportunities, which can further enhance and strengthen each team's capability and the INSARAG's network.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

The most significant success of INSARAG and its IEC/R system in 20 years is that INSARAG has been able to sustain and continuously improve the system and network. This sustainability has been further enhancing international USAR capability as a result.

Please keep on moving forward with INSARAG to reduce casualties caused by earthquakes, but, at the same time, imagine a world where INSARAG is no longer necessary by developing each country to have sufficient capability to cope with disasters.

MOFA HP:

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/emergency/assistance1.html>

X team account:

https://x.com/jdr_secretariat

JDR secretariat HP:

<https://www.jica.go.jp/english/activities/schemes/jdr/index.html>

JICA Magazine:

https://jicamagazine.jica.go.jp/en/article/?id=202307_2f





www.usar.cz

<https://play.google.com/store/search?q=rescue+shoring&c=apps>

2005

Current Full Capacity: 70 personnel and 8 search dogs

2006

Total number of international USAR deployments to date:

2007

Armenia (1988), Türkiye (1999 August, November), Algeria (2003), Iran (2003)

2008

Pakistan (2006, with Medical

Rescue Unit), Nepal (2015, with

2009

Advanced Medical post)

Lebanon (2020), Türkiye (2023),

and other deployments where USAR staff were deployed

2010



CZE-01 CZECH REPUBLIC "HEAVY"



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

Earthquake in Türkiye 2023 – Our team travelled from two different airports directly to Türkiye.

We had to decide to split the team into two independent teams since it was not possible to land in one place. Both parts had to be independently operational and contain all five components. The really challenging part was that 3 months after the deployment in Türkiye we had to be ready for IER in June 2023 – but we were successful.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

Deployments in Türkiye – As mentioned above, we have to travel from 2 separate airports. The whole deployment in Türkiye was really challenging and we are proud of our whole team.

We are especially proud of several things:

- Our K9 team members, who are highly valued abroad
- Our own training mobile applications – focused on shoring, which are possible to use for training and national deployments in whole Fire rescue service in CR.
- Our classifiers, trainers, WG members, who are very positively rated.
- Our current chairmanship in AEME region.
- Adaptation of new technologies to USAR structure – including UAVs and live streaming from the site to command post.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

Recently, it is unequivocally the deployment of all teams after the earthquake in Türkiye. The strength of all teams proved that the INSARAG network is functional and the teams can cooperate effectively even in such a



large earthquake. It is essential that work began immediately on the systemic errors that were revealed during the deployment. These changes will be reflected in the new INSARAG guidelines.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

If the INSARAG network does not start working on structural changes, it will become a typical bureaucratic UN organization that is not effective in decision-making, especially in policy-related topics.

Field deployments will still be very effective and they will be more reliant on modern technologies that are still moving forward quickly. (UAV, etc.)

Keep in mind that the main mission is to save lives, without any personal, political or religious ambitions.

Modern technology is a wonderful and beneficial tool, but we must be prepared to work without it.

FRA-01 FRANCE "MEDIUM"

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

Since obtaining IEC classification in 2010, one of the most significant challenges our team has faced was responding to the 2023 earthquake in Türkiye. The scale of devastation, logistical hurdles, and coordination with international teams pushed our capabilities to the limit. The immense need for rapid search and rescue, coupled with the complexity of working in an unfamiliar environment, required us to adapt quickly. However, despite these successes, one of the greatest challenges we continue to face is gaining recognition and financial support for NGOs like ours. Since obtaining IEC classification in 2010, ensuring sustainable funding and logistical resources has been a constant struggle. Unlike state-funded teams, NGOs must continuously seek financial backing to maintain readiness, train personnel, and acquire essential equipment. Gaining full recognition within national and international disaster response mechanisms remains an ongoing effort, despite our proven expertise and commitment. We overcame this challenge through rigorous training, strong coordination with INSARAG partners, and leveraging technological advancements in search and rescue operations. Our ability to integrate efficiently into the international response framework allowed us to maximize our impact and save 2 live victims despite the adversity.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

The most significant accomplishment in our history has been obtaining and maintaining the IEC classification, solidifying our credibility and operational excellence within the INSARAG Network. Additionally, our deployment to the Haiti earthquake in 2010 stands out as a defining moment, where our swift and effective intervention contributed to rescuing numerous lives and providing essential humanitarian aid. The adaptation of our best practices, such as our rapid deployment methodology and community-based preparedness programs, has influenced other teams within the INSARAG Network,

reinforcing our commitment to continuous improvement and knowledge sharing.

During the Türkiye earthquake, PUI deployed a Medium USAR team within hours, working in close coordination with INSARAG partners. Our team successfully conducted 2 alive victims rescues, including victims trapped under collapsed buildings for several days. This mission reaffirmed the effectiveness of our rapid mobilization strategy and our ability to operate in complex environments.

In terms of innovation, we have developed a highly mobile and self-sufficient USAR team model, which allows us to deploy quickly to remote and difficult-to-access disaster zones. This



Current Full Capacity: 36-40 personnel and 4 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 19



This collective effort ensures that affected communities receive timely and effective support, demonstrating the power of international solidarity.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, we envision the INSARAG Network evolving with advanced technology, including AI-assisted search techniques, drone-assisted reconnaissance, and enhanced real-time data sharing to optimize response efforts. We must be prepared

for big natural disasters and climate change. We also foresee a stronger emphasis on preventive measures, resilience building, and local capacity strengthening to mitigate disaster impacts.

model, which includes lightweight equipment, drone-assisted reconnaissance, and a strong focus on local capacity-building, has been recognized as a best practice within INSARAG.

Additionally, we take pride in adapting INSARAG Guidelines to community-based training programs, ensuring that local first responders are better equipped to handle disasters before international teams arrive. This has strengthened the resilience of vulnerable populations and enhanced the sustainability of our missions.

Through our continued commitment to international collaboration, innovation, and adaptation, we strive to improve emergency response efficiency and contribute to the evolution of best practices within the INSARAG Network.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The most significant milestone for the INSARAG community has been the standardization and implementation of internationally recognized guidelines for USAR. The establishment of the IEC system has greatly enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of global disaster response efforts.

Moreover, the strengthened collaboration between member teams, governments, and humanitarian organizations has significantly improved response times, coordination, and resource allocation during major disasters.



MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

For the next generation of USAR teams, we emphasize the importance of continuous learning, adaptability, and collaboration. The humanitarian landscape is constantly evolving, and the ability to integrate new technologies while maintaining the core values of teamwork, dedication, and efficiency will be key to ensuring INSARAG's continued success in saving lives.



STATE FIRE SERVICE
USAR
POLAND

CZECH REPUBLIC



LTU-01 LITHUANIA "MEDIUM"

Current Full Capacity: 24 personnel and 2 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 1.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

The biggest challenge was to keep our team alive after the decision was made to disband it. It was a huge disappointment and setback for our organisation after so many years of efforts to make our team stronger and more capable. Only by some extremely dedicated team members was it possible to overcome that five-year period and start all activities and preparation again from scratch. Those members kept believing that our team would have a chance to be reborn. And it happened, exactly as those team mem-



bers predicted, we got the chance to start everything again. With those extremely dedicated we overcome this period and now approaching new horizons of our team!

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

The biggest accomplishment is seeing how we are increasing the safety of people not only internationally, but also nationally, in our country. Team members after exercises comes back to their respective fire services and provide help to those who are in need.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The most significant achievement of the INSARAG community is raising the quality bar of rescuers teams around the globe. With greater quality we can provide more efficient and more suitable assistance for affected population.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

The INSARAG Network will be a bridge between those who started it and future successors, who will run it for the upcoming generations. Our message to future INSARAG teams is to keep believing in your team and members, because in times of disasters people believe in you!

RUS-01 RUSSIAN FEDERATION "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2011), 84 Personnel
<http://mchs.gov.ru>



KOR-01 REPUBLIC OF KOREA "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 75 personnel and 6 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date: 18 times since its foundation (1997)



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

Our greatest achievement was saving eight live victims in Türkiye in 2023.

Now, the team is taking a greater step forward in this community by hosting key programs such as the UNDAC Induction Course and the IRNAP Leadership Course, enhancing both activities and networks last year.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our opinion, the greatest achievement of the INSARAG Network was that they built a "one response system" to be on the same page!

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

This will lead to a more closely coordinated international cooperation system, where technological advancements such as AI, drones, data analysis, and information sharing will be integrated into disaster response efforts. Furthermore, strengthening disaster response capabilities in disaster-prone countries will contribute to local capacity building, creating a balanced approach between local resilience and USAR team operations.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

"A team with fundamentals is the strongest team."

Society is changing faster than ever before, and this pace will only accelerate. However, by staying true to the fundamentals while adapting to change, we can uphold and further develop the values INSARAG has maintained thus far.



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

After the 2015 Nepal earthquake response, the deployment of USAR teams for international missions declined. This trend continued with the overall slowdown in activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. However, recognizing the situation, the team remained committed to the fundamentals within the given conditions, focusing on sustaining and strengthening its capabilities. As a result, when the earthquake struck Türkiye in February 2023, the team was able to respond quickly, successfully carrying out rescue operations and saving eight live victims, proving its preparedness. This demonstrates how the team has overcome challenging periods and continues to play a crucial role in the international community.

Current Full Capacity: Total number of volunteers: 6000, International deployment roster: 400, K9: 4
Total number of international USAR deployments to date: 9 Total
Greece (1999), Taiwan (1999), India (2001), Iran (2003), Pakistan (2005), Haiti (2010), Nepal (2015), Mozambique (2019), Libya (2023)

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

One of the most significant challenges our team has faced since obtaining IEC classification was responding to the devastating earthquake in our country in 2023. This disaster had an immense impact not only on our operations but also on our team members personally, as we tragically lost some of our own volunteers. Despite the immense challenges, our team remained focused on our mission, working tirelessly to save lives and provide assistance in the aftermath of one of the most devastating catastrophes in our history. The unwavering dedication of our volunteers and international solidarity played a crucial role in overcoming this difficult period.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

Since our establishment in 1996, we've had the privilege of helping to save thousands of lives through our search and rescue efforts. Our work during major disasters stands out as a significant achievement. However, what we cherish most is the opportunity to support people during their most challenging moments, whether facing earthquakes, floods, or other disasters. Being able to offer relief to those in need is deeply meaningful to us and remains our greatest source of pride. One of the aspects we are most proud of within the INSARAG Network is the ability to operate as a fully volunteer-based organization in a network where state agencies, law enforcement, and military units are often



predominant. Despite not being a governmental body, our team has successfully integrated into international operations, proving that volunteer organizations can play a critical and professional role in disaster response.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

INSARAG's most significant achievement goes beyond improving coordination and collaboration among USAR teams; it is the network and trust built through numerous trainings and exercises. Fostering both operational efficiency and international solidarity makes a remarkable difference during times of crises.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Every day, we continue to grow stronger and expand, driven by a common purpose—to save lives. With this unwavering motivation and the rapid pace of development, INSARAG will, in 20 years, become an even more powerful global response network, making a profound difference in disaster-affected communities worldwide. Being part of this community and making a difference together is an unmatched source of motivation. To the new teams joining INSARAG, our best advice is to get involved. The impact of collaborating within this global family extends well beyond collective efforts; it encourages a network that enhances both effectiveness and adaptability. We look forward to welcoming new teams into this family and working side by side to save lives.

TUR-03 TÜRKİYE "MEDIUM"



www.akut.org.tr
x.com/akut_dernegi



instagram.com/akutdernegi



www.youtube.com/akut



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ESP-01 SPAIN "MEDIUM"



Current Full Capacity: 40 personnel and 4 dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 5
Haiti (2010), Chile (2010), Ecuador (2016), Türkiye (2023), Morocco (2023)



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Our biggest challenge was keeping the capacity of the team between deployments, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. We overcame this by staying active in international networks (INSARAG, UCPM) and participating in national and international training and exercises.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

The first international rescue by the team, a 2-year-old child only a few hours after landing in Haiti in 2010, with very little equipment due to delays of the aircraft transporting it. The previous trainings and preparations for the coming IEC were definitely important for this success. But also the miraculous rescue of a woman in the earthquake of Türkiye 2023, on the 7th day after the earthquake, where coordinated efforts of ESP-01 and TUR-04, breaching the concrete delicately with the supervision of a structural engineer and the skills in USAR medicine of our medical team were crucial for the survival of the victim after extraction.

We are proud of all the exchanges of knowledge and experience we have had with other teams in the network since 2008 through our participation in INSARAG meetings, training, exercises and IEC/IERs. It



was a special feeling to have mentored two of the first light-classified teams (@fire and GEA) and then see their good performance in the 2023 Türkiye earthquake. Our previous relationship as mentors of GEA allowed us to work together and was of great help in our deployment in our country.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The INSARAG Guidelines and the IEC/R system as a quality assurance system for the teams that adopt them.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

We hope that it will continue improving the methodology, adapting it to new challenges, as it has been doing since its creation.

We would like to make them understand the enormous value of having an international network of experts that can get together, with the support of the UN, to develop and assure the quality of disaster response. Disaster response is performed in extremely difficult circumstances, and having a common methodology that we all have adopted and trained which increases enormously the possibility of rescuing more lives. And we would also try to make them understand how important it is to maintain the INSARAG family, as it is of great help during all the phases of the disaster response.



ESP-02 SPAIN

"MEDIUM"

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

The most significant challenge was the rescue operation in Türkiye, where they faced extreme conditions, difficult terrain, and time pressure, with limited resources due to the large number of international teams deployed. Coordinating efforts with other teams and managing multiple simultaneous rescues were very complex.

The challenge was overcome through solid coordination, communication, and the implementation of clear protocols for the use of limited resources. Additionally, teamwork, the accumulated experience of team members, and support from the K9 handlers were key in successfully carrying out rescues in critical timeframes.

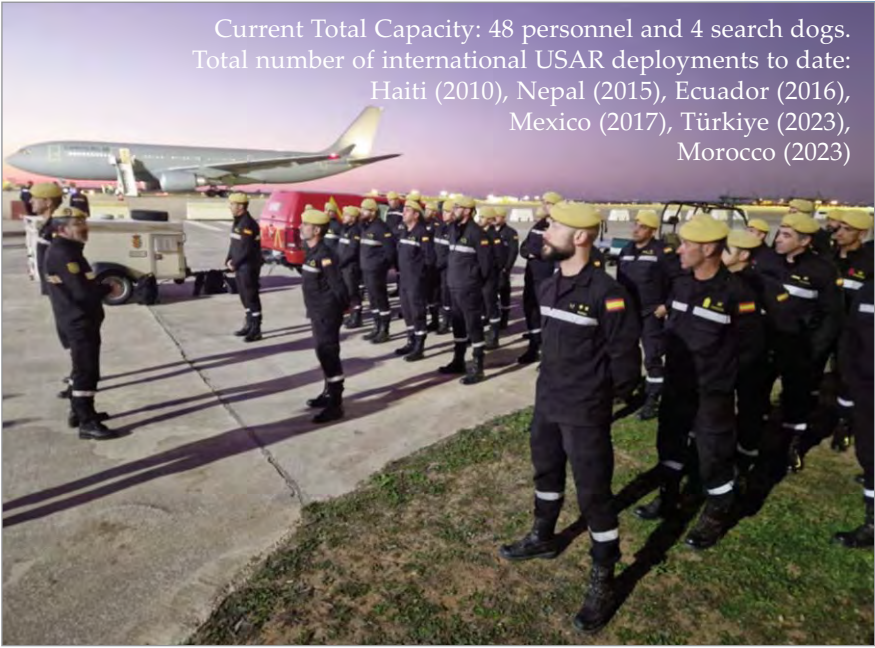
GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

The most significant achievement was the life-saving rescue of Leyla, Elif, and Muslim, a mother and her children, who were trapped for four days under rubble. They endured a rescue operation lasting more than 24 hours. They were located using technical search methods with geophones, and intense cutting and drilling work was carried out to free them.

One of the practices we are particularly proud of is the use of new detection and search technologies, such as geophones, which have enabled us to locate people in places where conventional searches were ineffective. Furthermore, our methodology of integration and collaboration with teams from other nations within the INSARAG network has improved the efficiency of our deployments. It is also important to note that all teams operate under the same INSARAG standards, enabling effective interoperability and a quicker, more precise responses during disaster situations.

THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The greatest achievement of INSARAG has been the creation of a globally coordinated response system to disasters. The community has been able to align and standardize procedures, allowing for faster and more efficient responses worldwide, with USAR teams working together to save lives. The fact that all teams work under the



Current Total Capacity: 48 personnel and 4 search dogs.
Total number of international USAR deployments to date:
Haiti (2010), Nepal (2015), Ecuador (2016),
Mexico (2017), Türkiye (2023),
Morocco (2023)

same standards and procedures makes the response smoother and more effective, regardless of the nationality of the team.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, we see INSARAG as a more integrated network, with increasingly specialized teams using advanced technologies in disaster response. It will also be essential for the network to continue evolving in terms of training and capacity-building, ensuring the sustainability and efficiency of international deployments. The most important lesson is that coordination, constant training, and teamwork are essential in high-stress situations. The next generation must be prepared to work not only with their own team but also with international teams from different cultures to achieve efficient responses and save lives. Additionally, it is crucial to work under the same INSARAG standards to ensure smooth and effective operations worldwide.

More about UME: <https://ume.defensa.gob.es/usar/index.html>
Haiti 2010: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/ume/Internacional/haiti.html>
Nepal 2015: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/ume/Internacional/haiti.html>
Ecuador 2016: <https://ume.defensa.gob.es/Internacional/ecuador.html>
Mexico 2017: <https://ume.defensa.gob.es/Internacional/mexico.html>
Türkiye 2023: <https://ume.defensa.gob.es/Internacional/Turquia.html>
Morocco 2023: <https://ume.defensa.gob.es/Internacional/Marruecos.html>



AUS-02 is a representation of the New South Wales State Government emergency service and government agencies. As an INSARAG Heavy Classified team they represent the Australian community and is funded by the Australian Government.

We held our IEC in 2012, but contributed to the INSARAG community since 2004. Most noteworthy of these contributions were our successive taskforce deployments to the 2011 Christchurch, New Zealand earthquake closely followed by Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Maintaining the well-being of our people is our greatest challenge. This is closely followed by the ever-increasing weather-related disasters of floods, tropical cyclones and bushfires.

We are committed to ensuring our deployed people are well prepared and supported in doing their job. The key to supporting and helping our deployed people is providing practical suggestions and access to employee assistance programs.

We offer practical advice for family and friends to support their deployed rescuer. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of self-care and awareness of available resources post-response.

While the team is deployed, we keep family members informed through secure social media updates and interactive meetings. For our rescuers, formal and peer support well-being programs offer a safe space to share their experiences.

Our second challenge is the ever-increasing weather-related disasters. We will meet this challenge through localisation and supporting the capacity building of the Asia Pacific community. We are committed to flexible

AUS-02 AUSTRALIA "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 72 personnel and 4 canines

Total number of international USAR deployments to date

We have deployed as a heavy team and agile flexible capability to our neighbours over the last two decades. Our international deployments include the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), Samoa tsunami (2009), Christchurch (2011), Greece (2018), Indonesia (2018), Solomon Islands (2019), and



response and working with the community beyond the initial response of a disaster. Our intent is to support the community in their recovery journey.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

We are proud of all our deployments, mentoring, and capacity building that we have undertaken. Each experience has provided many rewards and learnings for our team members.

We are most proud of our team's attribute of cultural awareness. This considered appreciation of culture continues to enhance the integration of our team into the community we are serving, which in turn meets our desired outcome of humanitarian assistance.

This was most evident in our response to Tropical



ies on 17 occasions, predominantly serving our Pacific nation
 yments have included:
 urch, New Zealand (2011), Japan (2011), Vanuatu (2015), Tonga
 , Tonga (2022), and Türkiye (2023).

Cyclone Pam's 2015 destruction of Vanuatu. By consul-
 ting with the local emergency management and commu-
 nity leaders, we were tasked with the reinstatement of
 the community hospital and schools. Our integrated
 approach of working with community members to bring
 the affected village to a level of normalcy
 defines 'working beyond the rubble'.

Our stories continue to inspire the
 AUS02 team to volunteer for these
 humanitarian response opportuni-
 ties.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The exponential growth of classified teams is a testa-
 ment to the credible and respected peer review system
 that supports our global community. In two decades the
 INSARAG community has mentored and nurtured more
 than 50 classified teams capable of responding to local
 and international disasters.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

The rapid rise in weather-related disasters
 such as floods, tropical cyclones and bushfires
 requires future-focused, adaptable, and inno-
 vative teams. An adaptable team coupled with
 the INSARAG best practice coordination
 system will ensure a sustainable network that
 remains valued by the global community.
 Message to the next generation of USAR teams
 INSARAG is an institution of humanitarian
 assistance that addresses human suffering
 wherever it is found. Your USAR team's com-
 mitment to mentoring, capacity building, and
 response will be one of the most enduring
 legacies for the international community.



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AUT-02 AUSTRIA "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 85 personnel and 9 search dogs
Total Number of International Deployments to Date: 13 international deployments.



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAM'S HISTORY

Our most significant challenge was the fact that between 2005 (Pakistan earthquake) and 2023 (Türkiye earthquake) AFDRU had no USAR deployment and internal support to run and maintain a USAR team was decreasing. To overcome this challenge, we kept on pushing and praying that being part of INSARAG and having a USAR team is of utmost importance, not only because of international deployments but also to have a professional USAR capacity at our disposal for national emergencies.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

We are a founding member of INSARAG and have supported the system since the beginning. We are particularly proud to have been part of the Türkiye 2023 deployment, during which we saved 9 victims' lives.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The publication of the INSARAG Guidelines, implementing the IEC/R system to have worldwide common standards, to strengthen international urban search and rescue activities with the goal of saving lives.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

INSARAG could still be a key player in the field of urban search and rescue as long as political interests play no major role. Furthermore, flexible response will be a future issue. Our message to the future generation of USAR teams is to take your time, reach a high level of professionalism, and believe in experience.



OMA-01 OMAN "MEDIUM"

Medium IEC USAR team (2012), 40 Personnel
<http://www.rop.gov.om>

Current Full Capacity: 50 personnel and 4 K9 units
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: Certain units of our team were deployed in Türkiye and Libya in 2023.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

The most significant challenge we have faced since obtaining IEC classification has been creating cohesion among volunteer team members despite the distance and geographical location of units. To overcome this challenge, we have tried to find as many opportunities as possible to practice together, build relationships, and resolve shared experiences. These opportunities and the IEC/IER system have helped us strengthen our capabilities and have reinforced our commitment to continuous improvement.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

One of our most significant accomplishments is that by bypassing our difficulties, we are still together, and Hungary and the world can count on our help in times of trouble.

We have managed to achieve our second badge of reclassification by INSARAG in 2023 during an EU MODEX Exercise in Bulgaria.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our opinion, the most significant achievement for us in the INSARAG com-



munity has been the development of our collaboration and coordination with other teams, as well as advancements in training standards. The INSARAG network has greatly enhanced international cooperation, ensuring that USAR teams can respond effectively and efficiently in times of crisis.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Looking 20 years ahead, we envision the INSARAG Network evolving into an even stronger, globally integrated system with enhanced technology and stronger regional coordination in order to save more lives. A key lesson we would like to share with the next generation of USAR teams is the importance of adaptability, continuous learning, teamwork and mental resilience. As challenges in disaster response grow, so must our capacity to innovate and collaborate to help those in need effectively.



TUR-01 TÜRKİYE "HEAVY"



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

International joint response capacity and criteria, as well as defined capacity qualifications.

The most significant milestone was establishing the infrastructure for a rapid and coordinated international aid organization with minimum standards set.



Current Full Capacity: 76 personnel and 6 K9 units
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 3
Nepal, Mozambique, Libya

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

More participating countries, more available first responder personnel. We would like to see the INSARAG network not only as a key player in urban search and rescue but also as a leading professional network in developing guidelines and standards for other areas such as flood response, mountain rescue, and CBRN incidents.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

Increase in search and rescue methods, rapid development, and technology-supported disaster response teams



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

Our biggest challenge in our history was the 6 February 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquake. In the same year during Libya flood mission, we faced severe meteorological conditions, possible infectious diseases, and high seasonal temperatures.

We overcame this challenge through flexible search and rescue, an adaptable work schedule, protective nutrition, and a strong focus on maintaining hygiene capacity.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

During the 6 February 2023 Kahramanmaraş-centered earthquakes, our AFAD 1 Istanbul team rescued 110 citizens alive from the rubble with a team of 115 personnel. Provision of INSARAG UCC support, establishment of the "Hatay EXPO" site at 6 February, support in setting up of RDC at Adana Airport, and swift and coordinated international aid organisation.



Current Full Capacity: 66 personnel and 6 K9 units
 Total Number of International USAR Deployments to
 Date: 2
 Serbia (2014), Türkiye (2023)



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

The greatest achievement of the team was the response to the earthquake that occurred in the Republic of Türkiye in 2023. This incident was the first practical challenge for the team since its IEC. The most significant result was saving 6 lives.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our opinion, the greatest achievement of the INSARAG community is the development and implementation of common methods and approaches for coordination and management of search and rescue operations during SAR operations. These guidelines help to coordinate the actions of rescuers more effectively during emergency response operations involving a large number of international search and rescue teams. As a result, they increase the chances of finding and saving the lives of victims.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

INSARAG plays an important role in international cooperation in the field of search and rescue operations. In the next 20 years, we can expect an increased number of classified search and rescue teams, as well as more countries and non-governmental organizations joining the network. In addition, the development of digital technologies and global cooperation will assist in the development of new emergency rescue equipment and devices for locating victims under the rubble, as well as new software to improve the efficiency of coordinating USAR teams' actions during SAR operations.



JOR-01 JORDAN "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2013), 100 Personnel
www.cdd.com.gov.jo

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FRA-02 FRANCE "HEAVY"



Current Full Capacity: 85 personnel and 4 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date: 2 since IEC:
Lebanon (2023), Türkiye (2023)

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS' HISTORY

Since the IEC in 2014, the biggest challenge our team, FRA-02, has faced is maintaining our technical skills and expertise despite constant personnel changes. As military personnel, rotations are frequent, making it difficult to ensure continuity in knowledge and experience. This challenge is particularly crucial in disaster response, where precision, efficiency, and coordination are essential to saving lives. We have overcome this challenge through our military values: self-sacrifice, resilience, and strong cohesion. Regardless of personnel changes, our commitment to giving our best for disaster-stricken populations remains unwavering. We understand that international coordination is vital, and we continuously train and adapt to ensure seamless cooperation with our partners. Our dedication to the mission drives us to maintain the highest level of readiness at all times.



long and demanding deployments, we have not only sustained our high level of performance but have also

continued to improve, always striving for excellence in Search & Rescue. Our dedication to training, adaptability, and international collaboration ensures that we remain ready to assist those in need, no matter the challenge.

Our deployment for the earthquake in Türkiye was a moment of great pride for us. Working alongside numerous international teams, we witnessed firsthand how disaster response can unite different cultures in a common mission. It was inspiring to see how INSARAG effectively coordinated such a diverse range of teams, ensuring seamless collaboration in the face of tragedy. This experience reinforced our belief in the power of international soli-

darity and the importance of maintaining the highest standards in Search & Rescue.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

Our greatest achievement has been the continuous expansion of our operational engagement, responding to an increasing number of missions both in France and around the world. Whether facing natural disasters like wildfires, floods, cyclones, or providing water purification, as well as technological emergencies, our team has consistently been at the forefront of crisis response. With

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our opinion, one of the most significant milestones the INSARAG community has collectively reached is the establishment and continuous improvement of the INSARAG coordination system, which enables seamless

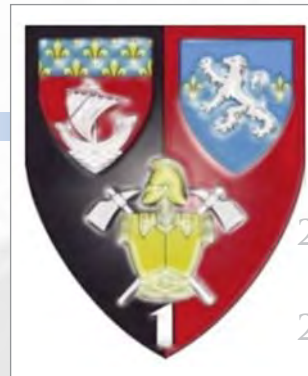


THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, we see the INSARAG Network becoming an even more advanced, adaptive, and globally integrated response system. We also see the INSARAG Network becoming an even more advanced, adaptive, and globally integrated response system.

To the next generation of USAR teams, we would share three key lessons:

- First, adaptability is crucial : every disaster is different, and the ability to think quickly, adjust strategies, and work under extreme conditions will make you a more effective rescuer ;
- Second, teamwork and international coordination are essential : no one responds to a major disaster alone, and learning to integrate with diverse teams, cultures, and protocols through frameworks like INSARAG will amplify your impact ;
- Finally, never stop learning and improving : whether through training, new technologies, or lessons from past missions, the pursuit of excellence in Search & Rescue will save more lives and strengthen the global USAR community. Stay dedicated, stay resilient, and always remember why you do this, to bring hope where it is needed most.



international collaboration during disaster response. The ability to rapidly deploy and integrate diverse teams from around the world under a common framework has revolutionized USAR operations. The INSARAG Guidelines, the establishment of the IEC/R process, and the development of coordination mechanisms like the OSOCC have strengthened global disaster response, ensuring that affected populations receive timely and effective assistance. This achievement showcases the power of international solidarity and the commitment to saving lives, no matter the challenge.



<https://uiisc1.fr>



Unité d'Instruction et d'Intervention de la Sécurité Civile N°1

FRA-03 FRANCE "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 85 military rescuers from the 7th battalion for civil protection and 4 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 13
Italy (1976), Algeria & Italy (1980), Lebanon (1983), Mexico (1985), Armenia (1988), Iran (1990), Türkiye (1992-99), Greece (1999), Taiwan (1999), Algeria (2003), Pakistan (2005), Haiti (2010), Albania (2019)



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAM HISTORY

FRA-03 is a classified team composed of military personnel from the 7th Battalion of Civil Protection. Our main challenge lies in the ability to maintain an elevated level of excellence within the rapidly expanding INSARAG framework. Ensuring a high level of technicality, while integrating methodological developments and innovations, is a complex mission that requires resources, rigorous training and constant adaptation. Moreover, this requirement is not limited to relief operations; it is also part of a broader framework where our teams must combine this specialty with other skills. The team is also certified in many European and international modules, which offer an extremely broad spectrum of action on any type of disaster, but also involve a significant training load to maintain the excellent level in all operational areas. This daily challenge thus requires a dynamic and proactive approach to meet the ever-increasing demands of international relief.

This challenge is met collectively through constant and rigorous commitment. It requires not only strict discipline in training, but also constant technological monitoring to integrate new materials and intervention methods. Moreover, while military status imposes a high turnover of team members, it also offers many advantages, including the requirement for training as close to reality as possible, entirely focused on operations and interoperability. It is supplemented by European and



international training courses that prepare rescuers to evolve in a context of international cooperation, and it is based on varied training sites that allow them to meet all of INSARAG's technical requirements. Greatest achievement of your team

The team intervened after the devastating earthquake in Haiti and its joint action with the field hospital (ESCRIM) helped to save many victims, both by removing them from the rubble and by taking them into care of the EMT Type 2.

Our ability to intervene jointly with our field hospital classified by the WHO as an Inpatient Surgical Emergency Care, as demonstrated by feedback from the Mexico earthquake, makes us particularly proud and efficient, especially considering the very high level of experience of our medical teams.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

Intervening in an extreme crisis situation, as is the case after a major disaster, requires great technical expertise, common sense, and a great deal of composure for the teams. However, nothing can be achieved if the responders do not speak a common language and do not have the same tools and work methods. In our opinion, this is INSARAG's greatest success: its ability to ensure effective international coordination during a major event.



Bringing together stakeholders from around the world around a common working methodology is a real feat. Each nation, with its own culture, operational procedures and specificities, manages to coordinate perfectly on the field without necessarily knowing the methods of the others. Thanks to INSARAG's structuring framework, these teams are able to harmonize their actions and collaborate effectively in a rescue-clearance theatre of operations. This standardized approach not only optimizes interventions, but also strengthens trust and interoperability between teams. The fact that such a diversity of stakeholders can work together in emergency situations is a testament to the success of this unique methodology.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

INSARAG is constantly evolving, driven by technological, digital and material advances that could significantly increase its effectiveness. Technological monitoring plays a key role in this dynamic, making it possible to adapt and optimise intervention methods. Exchanges between nations, joint exercises and specific training linked to INSARAG are all levers which, as they develop, contribute to the continuous improvement of the system. Feedback from field operations, combined with technical and organisational progress, continues to refine working processes and methodologies. Today's INSARAG is already very different from the one it was created in, and it is certain that in twenty years, it will

have evolved further to meet the increasingly complex challenges of rescue operations. This capacity for adaptation and innovation is the key to its effectiveness and sustainability on an international scale.



MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

The coordination work between the USAR teams, the UCC and the LEMA is essential for the proper management of a crisis. Relief work is not an individual race but rather joint work for a single objective: helping the population impacted by a major crisis. An effective intervention also relies on the ability of the teams to be ready to act at any time and in any place.



This piece of art was painted by Petty Officer Kwon, a recognised military painter, and was given the title "le sapeur sauveur et l'enfant", which means 'the rescuer and the child'. This painting was inspired by a photograph taken during one of FRA-03 missions

This requirement involves rigorous training, regular practice and constant adaptation to new challenges and technologies. Preparation is therefore much more than a simple requirement: it is the guarantee of a successful intervention and maximum impact on the field. Feedbacks from past missions have to be taken into account so that we can continue to evolve the INSARAG methodology and equipment, in order to make the system ever more optimal.



<https://uiisc7-brignoles.fr>

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

Since obtaining IEC classification, one of the most significant challenges our team has faced was deploying to the Türkiye earthquake in February 2023. This deployment was a true test of our capabilities, requiring rapid mobilization, identification of the necessary means of transport, efficient coordination with international teams, and sustained operations in a disaster environment.

The challenges included:

- Logistical complexity – deploying quickly with all necessary equipment and personnel by air using military aircraft and identifying the necessary means of transport to ensure the rapid movement of personnel, K9 units, and heavy equipment to the disaster zone, often under time constraints.
 - Interoperability – integrating smoothly with international USAR teams and local emergency responders.
- Despite these challenges, our team's resilience, thorough preparation, and commitment to INSARAG standards enabled us to operate effectively, provide critical assistance, and contribute to the overall success of the international search and rescue efforts.
- We overcame these challenges through strong coordination with national and international partners, and strict adherence to INSARAG standards.
- During the mission, we received invaluable support from Turkish liaison officers, who were embedded in our team and played a crucial role in facilitating operations on the ground. Their support significantly contributed to the successful execution of our missions by providing essential logistical assistance and ensuring smooth communication with local authorities.

Additionally, our team cooperated continuously with

the LEMA and other international search-and-rescue teams, which was highly effective and allowed us to integrate seamlessly into the broader response efforts.

We also benefited from the constant support of our headquarters, which ensured we had the necessary



resources throughout the deployment. This strong collaboration between all stakeholders enabled us to operate efficiently, provide critical assistance, and contribute to the overall success of the international search and rescue efforts.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

The most significant accomplishment in our team's history has been achieving the INSARAG External Classification IEC and IER, which recognized us as a fully certified international USAR team. This certification

validated our team's capabilities to respond to large-scale disasters globally, placing Romania on the international map for search and rescue operations. Additionally, our deployments to the Albania and Türkiye earthquakes stand out as pivotal moments. During these missions, we successfully operated in

ROU-01 ROMANIA "MEDIUM"

Current Full capacity: 59 personnel and 4 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date: 2



international environments, managing to fulfill our primary mission — saving lives. These missions not only showcased our operational readiness but also reinforced our commitment to best practices and humanitarian efforts in disaster response. At the national level, search and rescue teams have been established in every county across the country, all of which adhere to international standards during intervention missions. In recent years, significant investments have been made in personnel training, including the construction of a dedicated training facility for search and rescue teams. This facility has been used to



conduct specialized courses, with several thousand participants already benefiting from these training programs. Another notable achievement is that we are currently in an advanced stage of establishing a second medium USAR team for international missions, while simultaneously upgrading RO-USAR-01 to the Heavy level. These developments reflect our ongoing commitment to enhancing our capabilities and readiness to respond effectively to large-scale international disasters.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our opinion, the most significant milestone that the INSARAG community has collectively reached is the establishment and global recognition of the IEC/R system. This system has standardized and harmonized the capabilities of USAR teams worldwide, ensuring that teams meet internationally recognized criteria and can effectively collaborate in large-scale disaster response efforts.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, the INSARAG Network will continue to be a strong community, with expanded membership and enhanced collaboration. Technological advancements such as AI, drones, and robotics will boost search-and-rescue capabilities, while advanced training and simulation systems will keep teams prepared for emerging challenges. Improved interoperability and real-time coordination and communication tools will ensure seamless coordination between local, national, and international responders, making disaster response faster and more efficient. Overall, INSARAG will remain a key driver of global disaster preparedness and humanitarian efforts. The key message I would like to share with the next generation of USAR teams is "Coordination saves lives!" Success in search-and-rescue missions depends not only on individual skills but also on the ability of teams to work together effectively, both within their own group and with international partners.

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THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

As a result of the consultations, representatives from the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany were selected to conduct an assessment mission during the comprehensive team training held on 17-19 April 2014 in Kyiv, and on 29 April 2014, a representative from the Republic of Poland was officially introduced as a mentor to the MRC Ukraine search and rescue team.

The challenge for our team, after obtaining the IEC classification, was to integrate international standards and the requirements of the INSARAG system into the national guidelines that regulated the work of search and rescue operations for our rescuers.

In 2014, based on the results of an external INSARAG certification, the MRC Search and Rescue team was classified in the INSARAG system as a heavy class urban search and rescue team MRC Ukraine. On 7 September 2019, MRC Ukraine's heavy lift team successfully passed an external recertification by INSARAG.

OUR TEAM'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

By the decision of the President of Ukraine and the Government of Ukraine, from 7 to 18 February 2023, a heavy-duty search and rescue team of MRC Ukraine consisting of 87 people and 16 vehicles was sent to the Republic of Türkiye (Antakya) to eliminate the consequences of two powerful earthquakes that caused catastrophic destruction in 10 provinces of the country.

Due to the closure of the airspace over the territory of Ukraine and the impossibility of sending the full team from the main airport, it was decided to march to the scene in a combined way, namely: the control and coordination group departed from the reserve airport by two aircraft to arrive at the scene promptly, establish interaction with local authorities of the Republic of Türkiye,



determine the location for the deployment of the base camp, the area of work, tasks and meeting of the main forces; the main forces and equipment marched to the scene in a combined way.

Despite Russia's full-scale invasion, the search and rescue team of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine took part in the earthquake relief in the Republic of Türkiye and once again confirmed Ukraine's position as a reliable partner in providing assistance to other countries, fulfilling the obligations undertaken by Ukraine in the INSARAG system.

During the earthquake response, the Ukrainian team rescued one person (a woman), dismantled the rubble and emergency elements of 136 buildings, and recovered the bodies of 58 people, including 9 children, inspected 454 buildings and provided medical assistance to 13 people.

At present, the experience gained and the requirements of the INSARAG Methodology Guidelines help our team in the removal of debris from residential buildings and critical infrastructure caused by the hostilities in Ukraine.

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the rescue units of the MRC of the State

Emergency Service of Ukraine have made about 200 calls, during which 139 pieces of rubble was removed (51 residential buildings, 43 of them multi-story, 2 healthcare facilities, 2 educational institutions, 51 life support facilities, and 33 other facilities). In the course of the work, 50 people were rescued and 244 bodies were recovered.

THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The INSARAG network's greatest achievement is the creation of a global network of highly trained disaster response teams, and the standardisation and

UKR-01 UKRAINE "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 66 personnel, and 8 search dog



the
stabi-
lity of the
rescue team network
and increase their rea-
diness to respond to
any situation, inclu-
ding those caused by
the outbreak of hostili-
ties, through regular

exercises, training, improving standards, developing
new technologies (drones, robots, artificial intelligence,
geographic information systems, etc.) and increasing
funding to support the network. Along with the physi-
cal aspects of rescue operations, attention should also be
paid to psychological support for both disaster victims

improvement of rescue practices around the world. The
development of global standards for search and rescue
operations, which are applied in most countries of the
world, allows different countries to interact and use
common standards during international rescue missi-
ons.

The global support of the international network of res-
cue teams ensures that different international teams are
ready to join at short notice to assist affected countries
in responding to natural disasters and work together in
a coordinated manner to rescue people and minimise
the negative impact of the disaster. Training and coa-
ching of rescue teams in the INSARAG system allows
them to increase their professionalism and effectiveness
in crisis situations.

The development of technologies and methods resear-
ched within INSARAG contributes to improving the
efficiency of search and rescue operations, including the
use of drones, robotic systems and other innovations.
INSARAG's international cooperation also facilitates
coordination between governments, humanitarian orga-
nisations and other institutions working in the field of
rescue operations. These achievements make INSARAG
a key organisation in the field of international disaster
relief.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Climate change is contributing to an increase in the fre-
quency and intensity of natural disasters such as floods,
hurricanes and earthquakes. This means that rescue
organisations, including INSARAG, need to adapt their
strategies to new challenges such as erratic weather pat-
terns, changing types of disasters and increased need for
coordination at the global level.

As disasters and crises become more widespread, inter-
national cooperation will become even more important.
INSARAG has the potential to become an important
focal point for coordination between governments,
humanitarian organisations and other actors working in
the field of emergency response.

One of the priorities for INSARAG should be to ensure



- <https://mrcshr.dsns.gov.ua>
- <https://mrcshr.dsns.gov.ua/diialnist/komanda-mrc-ukrai-ne>
- <https://mrcshr.dsns.gov.ua/diialnist/osvita-i-nauka/sluz-bova-pidgotovka/dokumenti-navchalno-metodichnogo-zabezpecennia-shho-vikorisovuiutsia-pid-cas-zaniat-2025/dodatkovizaniattia-1>

INSARAG training videos of MRC Ukraine:



Peculiarities of actions of civil protection units during the
elimination of the consequences of disasters related to the
earthquake

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TT4U9EbOQZU>

Training of search and rescue team personnel using the INSARAG
system <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDKx5EKvc7k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x248brKjrpo>

Training video: 'INSARAG Base Camp (BC). Composition, deployment,
functions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x248brKjrpo>

and rescue teams. Given the stressful working condi-
tions, psychological support is an integral part of rescue
missions.

The future of INSARAG promises to be more technolo-
gically advanced, coherent and sustainable, allowing it
to better respond to changes in the global environment
and the needs of countries in times of disaster.

MAR-01 MOROCCO "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2014), 82 Personnel
www.protectioncivile.ma

Current Full Capacity: 282 personnel and 8x K9 units
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 16

Taiwan (1999), Thailand (2004), Indonesia (2004), Japan (2011), Solomon Islands (2014) Vanuatu (2015), Fiji (2016), Tonga (2018), Samoa (2019), Cook Islands (2021), Fiji (2021), Papua New Guinea (2022), Türkiye (2023), Vanuatu (2023 and 2024),.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

One of the most significant challenges faced by the New Zealand USAR team since achieving the IEC was the Cyclone Gabrielle response in 2023. This was the largest and most complex domestic USAR deployment in New Zealand's history since the Christchurch Earthquake in 2011. The scale of destruction, combined with widespread infrastructure failures, made it particularly



challenging to coordinate rescue efforts, conduct search operations, and maintain logistical support. This response demonstrated the resilience, adaptability, and expertise of New Zealand USAR in managing large-scale disasters. It reinforced the need for strong partnerships, advanced technology, and continuous training to maintain our world-class USAR capability.

The team focused on rapid mobilization by pre-positioning USAR teams and securing air support early. They used satellite and radio communications to overcome network issues and shared real-time intelligence with partners. Drones assisted in damage assessment and locating stranded individuals, while resource deployment prioritized life-saving efforts. Collaboration with Australia and Pacific partners strengthened the response, and training improvements were made based on lessons learned to enhance future preparedness.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

One of the most notable achievements in the history of New Zealand USAR was achieving IEC in 2015, marking a significant milestone in the team's development. This classification officially recognised New Zealand USAR as a Heavy USAR team under INSARAG standards, ensuring the team met globally recognised operational benchmarks for disaster response. Since achieving IEC, New Zealand USAR has played a critical role in both domestic and international disaster responses. The team achieved Full Operational Capability through the IEC assessment, proving its disaster response skills. The classification strengthened New Zealand

USAR's global reputation and partnerships. The team has improved continuously through training, deployments, and the IER process.

By consistently contributing expertise, fostering collaboration, and championing best practices, New Zealand USAR has forged strong relationships within the INSARAG Network. This commitment ensures global USAR standards remain relevant, effective, and continuously evolving to meet the challenges of modern disaster response.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

From New Zealand's perspective, the INSARAG Guidelines and Coordination System have been the most significant achievement, ensuring global consis-



<https://www.facebook.com/fireandemergencynz/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NZUSAR>



<https://www.instagram.com/fireandemergencynz>

ally in the Pacific and Asia-Pacific. These teams will work more smoothly with civilian, military, and humanitarian groups. With climate change ramping up disasters, we'll need flexible, multi-disciplinary teams and new training for emergencies like flooding and extreme weather. On top of that, green strategies will lessen the environmental impact, while self-sufficient, local teams reduce the need for international help.

New Zealand USAR will continue to lead in Pacific engagement, UAV innovation, and regional



tency in USAR operations and strengthening our ability to respond to disasters both at home and across the Pacific.

New Zealand USAR has boosted Pacific nations' search and rescue capabilities through training and mentorship.

It has led INSARAG groups, shaping response coordination and technology integration in global USAR operations.

NZ USAR has participated in exercises to enhance INSARAG response methods and global team interoperability.

By maintaining INSARAG standards, strengthening regional partnerships, and driving innovation, New Zealand USAR continues to enhance disaster response capabilities across the Pacific and beyond.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Over the next two decades, the INSARAG Network will evolve into a more integrated, technology-driven, and adaptable global response system, ensuring faster, more effective disaster relief efforts.

Advanced technology and AI are set to revolutionize disaster response, using AI for damage assessment and real-time data to speed up decision-making. Drones and robotics will make dangerous environments safer, while more USAR teams will form in developing areas, especi-



capacity building, ensuring resilient, adaptable, and highly skilled USAR teams for the future.

For future USAR teams, the focus should be on preparedness, innovation, and collaboration, ensuring that INSARAG remains at the forefront of global disaster response.

KSA-01 SAUDI ARABIA "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2015), 90 Personnel
<https://www.998.gov.sa>

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ARM-01 ARMENIA "MEDIUM"

Current Full Capacity: 100 personnel, and 4 search dogs
Total number of international USAR deployments to date: Türkiye (2023), Syria (2023)

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN HISTORY AS A TEAM

The biggest challenge for our team was our deployment to Türkiye. Although Armenia and Türkiye are neighboring countries, this was our first experience interacting with Turkish people in a disaster response context. Naturally, there was uncertainty among team members, especially given the tragic circumstances. However, thanks to our team's professionalism and dedication, there was no psychological pressure. We remained fully focused on reaching the disaster site quickly to save lives. Upon our arrival at the airport, any uncertainties we had were immediately dispelled, as we were greeted with warmth and kindness by the Turkish people. For us as Armenian rescuers, human life holds the highest value, and we believe in risking our own safety to bring hope and rescue to people in need, regardless of nationality. Disasters know no borders, and humanitarian assistance should also transcend all boundaries.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

Our greatest achievement remains the successful deployment to Türkiye, where we were able to provide life-saving assistance during a critical time. Furthermore, we have adapted and shared our best practices within the INSARAG Network. One such practice is our focus on team cohesion and psychological resilience, which has helped us manage the emotional challenges of working in a disaster zone. We



have also worked closely with other teams to promote joint training and knowledge exchange, which has been instrumental in enhancing our collective capability.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our view, the most significant achievement of the INSARAG community has been the ability to communicate and respond as one unified network, regardless of where we are located on the globe. Today, all continents are represented within INSARAG, and we all speak the same language of disaster response, cooperation, and solidarity.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Looking ahead, I see the future of INSARAG as an ever-growing and dynamic community. While significant progress has been made, there are still countries, especially in Africa and Central Asia, which we hope will join this important network in the coming years. As we continue to develop, I would love to see INSARAG fostering more partnerships and expanding its reach to include even more teams and countries, ensuring a truly global network.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

I would also encourage the next generation of USAR teams to embrace this spirit of international cooperation and humanitarian service, always putting lives first.



Current Full Capacity: 42 personnel
Total number of international USAR deployments to
date: Türkiye

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR HISTORY AS A TEAM

For us, the most challenging thing is to keep a roster that is trained and motivated, especially with not that many missions. Finding new ways to do the same exercises differently for example a 36-hour exercise with neighbouring countries as a "mini MODEX". We overcome this challenge by offering international exercises (EU MODEX, ERE) and national training.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR TEAM

Despite the fact that our close neighbouring countries have closed their international USAR capabilities due to being far away from disaster-prone areas, our rescue board has kept the vision of keeping the team active. We are especially proud of our 2023 deployment to the Türkiye earthquake. This was an eye-opening deployment; on one hand all the exercises have come in handy because a lot of injects there are real-life-like, but on the other hand there are aspects that can never be 100% trained. For our team it was a tough pressure from journalists back home (there were 5-6 interviews per day), lessons learned from logistics (our personal bags being lost at Incirlik airbase), and the advantages of having a local with the team (who has contacts, knows the language, culture and traditions).

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/EST.EDRT>



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our opinion the expansion of INSARAG from Europe to Asia and Americas and first classifications in those regions was the greatest achievement. That is where the most earthquake-prone countries are.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years from today the year will be 2045 and the INSARAG Network will have been active for 54 years. We foresee changes in generations amongst the teams and in policy making, out with the old and in with the new. People will be replaced, decision making probably will change. The interpretation of the guidelines will change since the people who were in the beginning of the birth of INSARAG will retire and their views and understandings of the network will go with them and a new approach will be applied by the next generation. Our message to the future generation is that history will repeat itself, you will make the same mistakes we made.

On our photos regarding international friendship are from our deployment to Türkiye. The woman on the right is a Turkish Red Crescent volunteer worker who during the disaster decided to help us and ended up being a valuable member of the team to the end of our deployment. We received a lot of help from her. The woman on the left is our teams' staff member. During the mission they had time to chat and get to know each other.



EST-01 ESTONIA "MEDIUM"



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QAT-01 QATAR "HEAVY"

Current Full Capacity: 90 Personnel and 7 K9 units
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: a total of 95 so far

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

The greatest challenge faced by the team has been ensuring that the team remains well-trained, equipped, and ready for deployment at all times, despite changes in team members, budget constraints, or shifting national priorities.

The team overcame the challenge by developing a 5-year action plan that includes the retention of practical knowledge, operational readiness, continuous training of team members, and ensuring the provision of any logistical and material requirements for the team.



cant strength. The inclusion of a K9 veterinarian in the team to monitor the condition of the K9 units is also a noteworthy practice. The most significant milestone or achievement reached by the INSARAG community collectively is the enhancement of regional and international cooperation among search and rescue teams. Through shared experiences, training, and real-world deployments, we have demonstrated that we are stronger together.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

We envision that the INSARAG network in 20 years will have significantly developed in various fields thanks to

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

The team's most significant achievement was obtaining the "Heavy" external classification by the INSARAG in 2015.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

Among the team's deployments, we are particularly proud of one of the best practices within the INSARAG network, which was showcased during the Türkiye and Syria earthquakes. The team successfully entered the disaster area in Syria to carry out search and rescue operations.

Additionally, the team's self-sufficiency during deployments, with our own fleet of rescue and support vehicles, has been a signifi-



technological advancements and increased international cooperation. It will be more capable of dealing with natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, fires) with higher efficiency, contributing to saving more lives and reducing material and environmental damage.

The lessons and messages we want to share with the next generation of USAR teams are: to maintain and continue the cooperation with INSARAG and to implement the standards and procedures that help teams maintain a high level of performance.



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Following our INSARAG classification, maintaining continuous operational readiness while ensuring ongoing compliance with international deployment standards has presented our greatest challenge. This encompasses keeping equipment at required standards, providing team members with comprehensive training, and sustaining effective coordination capabilities with international rescue partners.

We implemented a multi-faceted approach to address these challenges:

1. We established a rigorous program of regular training exercises to enhance and maintain critical skills in urban search and rescue operations, management systems, logistics coordination, and emergency medical response. This systematic approach ensures our operational effectiveness remains at peak levels for real-world deployments.
 2. We prioritized the continuous upgrading and meticulous maintenance of our specialized rescue equipment and technology. This commitment guarantees that all our resources consistently meet INSARAG's stringent standards and remain deployment-ready at all times.
 3. We fostered strategic partnerships through ongoing collaboration with international rescue teams, government bodies, and non-governmental organizations to strengthen coordination during joint operations. These collaborative relationships facilitate valuable knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and expertise development, ultimately enhancing our collective response capabilities.
 4. We instituted comprehensive feedback and evaluation protocols, including simulated disaster scenarios, to objectively assess our performance and verify alignment with INSARAG's international standards.
- These combined initiatives ensure our team maintains complete readiness for rapid deployment during emergencies, with the capacity to deliver effective assistance when called upon.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

Our most notable accomplishment was our swift and effective response to the 2023 Türkiye earthquakes.



Mobilized as a Heavy USAR Team, we demonstrated exceptional operational efficiency and deployment speed. Within just six hours of activation, our team was en route to Türkiye, arriving in the affected area by the earthquake's second day, ready to commence critical rescue operations. Our deployment's crowning achievement came through our seamless coordination with local emergency services, resulting in the successful rescue of five alive survivors from a single collapsed structure—a testament to our team's technical proficiency and unwavering commitment to saving lives in extremely challenging conditions. We take particular pride in our advanced crisis communication framework, which proved invaluable during disaster response operations. Our methodology centers



MAS-01
MALAYSIA "HEAVY"

on identifying and engaging crucial stakeholders—the key entities and individuals central to disaster response management. Effective communication with local authorities, emergency responders, community representatives, humanitarian organizations, media outlets, and affected populations is essential for a coordinated response. Alignment among these diverse groups prevents the confusion and inefficiency that can severely hamper relief efforts.

During our 2023 Türkiye earthquake operations, we excelled in establishing robust coordination channels with both local and international authorities. This strategic approach ensured all response partners maintained unified objectives and coordinated actions. By cultiva-

ting open communication with government agencies, international organizations, and local response teams, we optimized resource allocation, eliminated redundant efforts, and directed capabilities precisely where they delivered maximum impact. We've also developed expertise in recognizing and adapting to community-specific contexts. Our approach acknowledges that communities present distinct cultural, social, and logistical characteristics requiring customized response strategies. By prioritizing attentive engagement with affected populations, comprehending their particular concerns, and addressing their specific requirements, we build trust-based relationships that enhance collaborative potential and maximize the effectiveness of our humanitarian interventions.



guiding countries in developing robust USAR capabilities.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

The INSARAG network will likely undergo transformative evolution over the next two decades, driven by technological advancement.

Widespread integration of artificial intelligence and robotics will revolutionize operations, incorporating AI-powered search algorithms, aerial and ground-based drone systems, advanced sensory technologies logistical automation, and robotic assistance throughout the USAR operational spectrum.

An expanding number of nations will implement INSARAG guidelines to develop self-sufficient USAR capabilities, creating robust local and regional response networks. This will further expand teams to share the best practices and knowledge in special rescue skills around the globe.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

Prioritize sustained training and preparedness as foundational elements for maintaining peak operational readiness.

Cultivate exceptional leadership qualities and team coordination capabilities to ensure seamless, effective response during high-pressure deployments.

Develop organizational adaptability to navigate unpredictable disaster environments, emphasizing flexibility, innovative problem-solving, and rapid-response capabilities.

Sharing the best practices/ capacity/ skills globally for the humankind beyond national borders. By this sharing worldwide, we collectively strengthen the international humanitarian response framework and ensure that life-saving capabilities reach communities most vulnerable to disasters.



Current Full Capacity: 85 personnel and 4 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In our assessment, INSARAG's most significant contribution has been strengthening national and regional response capacities worldwide. The network has played a pivotal role in developing indigenous USAR capabilities in disaster-vulnerable nations, substantially enhancing capacity to react sufficiently and enhancing local emergency response infrastructure. INSARAG facilitates valuable cross-team support through training initiatives, expertise sharing, experience exchange, and USAR best practice dissemination. The comprehensive INSARAG guidelines have become an indispensable framework

<https://www.facebook.com/smartteammalaysia>

RUS-02 RUSSIAN FEDERATION "MEDIUM"

Current Full Capacity: Number of personnel: 54 & 4 dogs;
Total Number of International USAR deployments to
Date: 0.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

The most difficult challenge since the classification was the pandemic period, when the usual algorithms and routines changed, but thanks to well-coordinated team-work and support from each other, the Team was able to adequately overcome this challenge and was able to remain operational.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

The Team has been recognized as the best in Russia three times in its history. Of course, an important achievement was the INSARAG classification of the Team and the subsequent IER, which confirms the professionalism of the Team and rescuers at the international level. The participation of our specialists as the IEC/R classifiers Team members and as mentors for other



teams was also an achievement. But we consider the relationships within the Team to be the most important achievement – support and partnership in all situations.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The most important achievement of the INSARAG network is the creation of a harmonious environment where rescuers from different countries, cultures, and faiths can cooperate on equal terms and bring their ideas to the development of the international response.



THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

After 20 years, we see the continuation of the direction of cooperation and partnership among rescuers from different countries, opportunities to prove themselves for everyone who has ideas about improving the international response.



Current Full Capacity: 86 personnel and 8 K9 units
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 4 deployments.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Our biggest challenge was to maintain a high level of readiness of the team. We overcame this by training and participating in national and international field and table-top exercises.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF YOUR TEAM

As the main objective of all USAR teams is to save lives, the most significant accomplishment of our team is saving 13 live victims during Türkiye earthquake response.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The INSARAG network's greatest achievement is the creation of a unified, highly skilled, and collaborative global system for urban search and rescue, which has been crucial in saving countless lives and reducing suffering in the aftermath of disasters worldwide.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

The INSARAG network in 20 years will be an even more robust, tech-savvy, and globally integrated system,



capable of responding to increasingly complex and diverse disaster scenarios

with enhanced efficiency and precision.

They should approach their work with a balance of passion, professionalism, and compassion. By staying well-trained, flexible, and grounded in their mission to save lives, they will continue the important legacy of urban search and rescue while adapting to the new challenges that the future holds.



RSA-01 SOUTH AFRICA "MEDIUM"

Medium IEC USAR team (2017), 49 Personnel
www.joburg.org.za

TUR-02 TÜRKIYE "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2017)
www.ankaraafad.gov.tr



CHI-01 CHILE "MEDIUM"

Current Full Capacity:

135 members divided into three shifts of 45 people each

Total Number of International USAR

Deployments to Date: 2



BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

The most important challenge that teams typically face after obtaining the IEC is ensuring compliance with international standards in real operations, training exercises, and recertification. According to INSARAG Guidelines, teams must continuously demonstrate their ability to coordinate USAR operations in complex environments while collaborating with other international agencies.

Key challenges for USAR teams include maintaining operational readiness through trained personnel and updated equipment, coordinating effectively with international teams, undergoing regular reclassification via audits and training, and managing complex logistics such as customs, equipment transport, and coordination with local authorities in disaster zones.

We address these challenges through continuous training, equipment updates, and international coordination.

Regular drills, equipment maintenance, and advanced technical training ensure operational readiness. Global exercises and tools like Virtual OSOCC enhance cooperation with other teams. Recertification preparation includes evaluation drills, audits, and feedback. Efficient logistics management, including rapid deployment plans and agreements with local authorities, ensures quick response times. Psychosocial support and stress management training help personnel cope with high-stress situations. Ongoing post-mission reviews and knowledge-sharing foster continuous improvement.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

Without a doubt, our IEC classification in 2017 was our most significant milestone. This was particularly challenging due to the difficulties we faced during the two-year planning and training process leading up to the final exercise. Since our team is 100% composed of

volunteer firefighters from Chile, this posed an even greater challenge, requiring us to dedicate our free time exclusively to training while also working on standardizing procedures, search and rescue operations, logistics, and more. One of the most outstanding implementations within the INSARAG Network is the adoption of the USAR Team Classification System. This tool has standardized USAR team capabilities and procedures worldwide, ensuring

that every team meets international standards. I am particularly proud of how this system has been adapted to local realities, allo-

wing even resource-limited nations to participate and enhance their capabilities. Additionally, the use of emerging technologies, such as drones for damage assessment and victim search, has been a key innovation that has significantly increased team efficiency.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The greatest achievement of INSARAG has been the establishment of a global network for cooperation and effective coordination. Before its existence, international disaster response was often chaotic and disorganized. Thanks to INSARAG, there is now a structured framework that enables international teams to work efficiently together, reducing response time and maximizing impact. The United Nations' formal recognition of INSARAG's procedures has also been a crucial milestone, consolidating its authority and legitimacy in global USAR operations.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, We see INSARAG as an even more integrated and technologically advanced network. It will likely play a key role in disaster risk management, not only in response but also in prevention and mitigation. We envision automated risk monitoring systems being implemented, with expanded team capabilities to address complex emergencies such as climate change-related disasters and technological hazards.

To the next generation of USAR teams, We would say that the key to success is not just technology or technical skills but international cooperation and humanitarian commitment. Humility, adaptability, and a willingness to learn from every situation are essential. They should also embrace innovation while never forgetting the primary mission: saving lives and reducing human suffering in critical moments.

ITA-01 ITALY "HEAVY"

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Managing a heavy team has proven to be complex, and it is not easy to respect the activation times. We made great organizational efforts, especially to ensure the maintenance of the efficiency of the equipment and the training of the staff. After long discussions, we decided to review our international response capacity to make it more flexible and rapid. In 2026, therefore, we will classify a Medium module (ITA-01) composed of 58 units and a Light module (ITA-02) composed of 20 units to replace the Heavy module.

Current Full Capacity: 84 personnel & 4 search dogs
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: Albania (2019), Türkiye (2023), Libya (2023)



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

We have fully implemented the INSARAG methodology also at national level. Our SOPs are compliant with the guidelines. We have worked hard on coordination which we believe is crucial for the success of rescue operations. The information management tool used at international level (ICMS) has been replicated so as to use it also in national emergencies in order to optimize staff training.

During the earthquakes in Türkiye, we coordinated the activity of one of the SCCs, demonstrating the developed capabilities and providing a good contribution to the relief operations. We participated in some working groups promoted by INSARAG and shared our national methodologies on some specific aspects, such as, for example, the safeguarding of cultural heritage during emergencies.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The ability to develop unconditional collaboration between nations without political or ideological barriers, with the common goal of saving lives.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

New technologies and climate change require increasingly effective and professional response capabilities. The INSARAG community will certainly offer support for development at both national and international levels.

Our task requires passion, commitment, training, and continuous updates. Be proud to be part of a community that shares a noble mission with a spirit of brotherhood and solidarity.

COL-01 COLOMBIA "MEDIUM"

Medium IEC USAR team (2018), 148 Personnel
www.gestiondelriesgo.gov.co/usar

ISR-01 ISRAEL "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2018), 87 Personnel
<http://www.oref.org.il>

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Mobilization for International Humanitarian Response, especially airlift arrangements and medical evacuation for team members.

Pakistan Rescue Team (PRT) has established its own Air Rescue Service which can swiftly airlift the assessment team and medically evacuate affected team members within the country and regional countries. For long-distance international response PRT has a collaboration with several airlines and even the Prime Minister's Office & NDMA Pakistan are able to arrange for Pakistan Air Force aircraft.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

- Immediately after IEC classification at the end of October 2019, the PRT was swiftly able to set up a Base of Operations, Triage & Decontamination Area for the COVID response.



- International response to the Türkiye Earthquake in 2023, the very next day after classification, where the team exhibited its professional skills along with other USAR teams.
- The PRT organized the International Rescue Challenge 2024, along with the INSARAG Asia Pacific Exercise in Lahore, Pakistan, which was attended by 276 delegates from 23 countries and 30 humanitarian organizations.
- First domestic deployment just three months after IEC for the COVID-19 pandemic, establishing one of the largest quarantine centers, a triage area, shifting COVID-19 patients, and carrying out dignified burials.
- Deployment of the team for Search & Rescue and evacuation during the 2022 flood operation, demonstrating flexible response beyond the rubble.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

Recalling the helplessness of victims during the 2005 Pakistan Earthquake, INSARAG has become a ray of



PAK-01 PAKISTAN "MEDIUM"

Current Full Capacity: 65 Personnel

Total Number of International USAR deployments to date: Türkiye (2023)



hope for all earthquake-prone countries by enhancing the disaster response capacity of teams locally and globally.

In this regard, the development of the INSARAG Guidelines and the capacity-building of USAR teams through mentors have provided a standardized framework for international USAR operations. This achievement has improved coordination, enhanced effectiveness and increased safety, making INSARAG a leading network in global USAR operations.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In the next 20 years, we envision the INSARAG network to be a highly advanced, technology-driven, and glo-

CHN-02 – CHINA "HEAVY"

Heavy IEC USAR team (2019), 98 Personnel

INA-01 – INDONESIA "MEDIUM"

Medium IEC USAR team (2019), 61 Personnel
www.basarnas.go.id



community resilience. It will have to expand its operations to include new areas such as climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction, and responses to floods and wild-land fires, in addition to its traditional USAR mandate. By 2045, INSARAG will be a benchmark for international disaster response, leveraging innovation and collaboration to create a safer world.

To the next generation of USAR teams, we would like to share that preparation, collaboration and adaptability are key to success. Stay updated

with the latest technologies and techniques, work together as a global community and be prepared to adapt to evolving disaster scenarios. By doing so, you will save more lives and make a meaningful difference during disasters.



bally coordinated system. With the integration of AI, drones and satellite imaging, INSARAG will be able to respond to disasters more swiftly and effectively, saving countless lives. The network will expand to include more countries, particularly in vulnerable regions and will focus on capacity building, knowledge sharing and



<https://youtu.be/XxHJm0ZfVbg>
(International Rescue Challenge)

<https://youtu.be/ID7MWabcBq4>
(Asia Pacific Earthquake Response Exercise)

RUS-03 RUSSIAN FEDERATION "MEDIUM"

Medium IEC USAR team (2021), 226 Personnel
www.new.dvrpso.ru ANope

GER-03 GERMANY "LIGHT"

Light IEC USAR team (2021), 20 Personnel
www.at-fire.de

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

The greatest challenge faced by the team since receiving the IEC certification has been the external interventions, such as the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, as well as the floods in Derna. However, we triumphed over this challenge through continuous training, the unwavering readiness of the majority of our team members, and their remarkable ability to confront and overcome the most difficult situations.

Greatest achievement as a team

Since the establishment of the specialized unit, the team has achieved numerous remarkable milestones:

- National interventions in the fields of rescue and fire-fighting, showcasing their unmatched expertise and dedication.
- International interventions, where the team has extended its invaluable support beyond borders, demonstrating their global reach and commitment.
- Participation of the Tunisian team in white operations abroad, contributing to humanitarian efforts on an international scale.
- The specialized unit now boasts trainers who are responsible for training foreign teams, further cementing its position as a leading force in global disaster response.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

In my opinion, the most significant milestone that the INSARAG community has collectively reached is the establishment of a global, standardized framework for international disaster response. This framework has greatly improved the coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of search and rescue operations worldwide. Through the development of common guidelines, best practices, and training programs, INSARAG has fostered an unprecedented level of cooperation between countries, agencies, and organizations.

One of the standout achievements is the IEC/R system, which ensures that teams meet a high standard of operational readiness, helping countries to trust and rely on one another during disaster response. This classification has not only enhanced the credibility and reliability of USAR teams but has also built a foundation of trust, making international missions more effective. Additionally, INSARAG has facilitated the sharing of knowledge and resources, which has been crucial in enhancing the capabilities of disaster response teams, particularly in developing nations. Through its commitment to capacity building, the INSARAG community has truly created a global network that stands ready to respond to the most devastating natural and man-made disasters, making the world more resilient in the face of adversity.



TUN-01 TUNISIA "MEDIUM"

The current full capacity : 52 personnel and 4 dogs.
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to
Date : 3
Türkiye, Syria and Libya

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In two decades, I envision INSARAG expanding its reach and influence, fostering even stronger collaborations among countries and agencies. The network will likely integrate more advanced technology and data-sharing systems, improving the coordination, speed, and effectiveness of international search and rescue operations. Additionally, INSARAG could play a pivotal role in strengthening the capacity-building efforts of emerging USAR teams worldwide, ensuring that new teams are equipped with the latest knowledge, techniques, and resources. The network may also emphasize disaster risk reduction and preparedness alongside response, helping communities become more resilient in the face of disasters.

As for lessons and messages for the next generation of



USAR teams, I would emphasize the importance of continuous training and adaptability. The landscape of disasters is constantly changing, and teams must be ready to evolve with new challenges. The integration of technology, such as drones, robots, and real-time data



sharing, will be crucial for efficient operations. Furthermore, the ability to work in collaboration and unity with international teams, understanding diverse cultures and systems, will be essential for overcoming the most complex challenges. Lastly, maintaining a focus on humanity and compassion—while delivering technical expertise—remains central to the essence of USAR missions. Let's never forget that our work is not just about rescue, but about bringing hope and relief to those who need it most.

TUR-04 TÜRKİYE "LIGHT"



We addressed this challenge by:

- Establishing a strong support mechanism for team members with affected relatives.
- Ensuring emotional and psychological support for one another during and after deployment.
- Extending our efforts beyond the immediate rescue phase by engaging in rehabilitation activities to support the affected communities.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

One of our most significant accomplishments was our response to the Nepal Earthquake, where GEA was among the first teams to arrive. This mission demonstrated the effectiveness of a light USAR team in a large-scale disaster, contributing to discussions on the role and importance of light USAR teams within the INSARAG network.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

INSARAG's most remarkable achievement is the creation of a global network that unites expertise, fosters knowledge sharing, and encourages collaboration and partnerships. The network's ability to continuously learn from its own experiences has made it a blueprint for many other response frameworks worldwide.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Looking ahead, we envision INSARAG:

- Expanding capacity-building efforts to prepare teams for a wider range of disasters, particularly those linked to climate change.
- Leveraging technology, AI, and advanced communication tools to enhance disaster response capabilities and coordination.

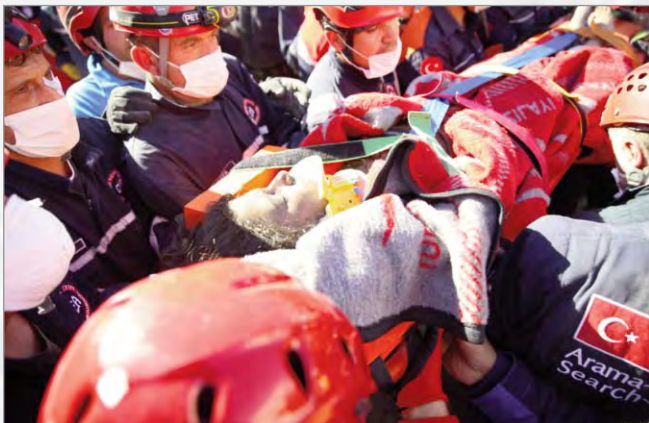
MESSAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF USAR TEAMS

INSARAG is an inclusive environment, where every team has valuable experiences to share. The strength of the network lies in working together, continuously learning, and striving to improve global response efforts.

Current Full Capacity: 600+ personnel, in Light Team structure, 18 personnel
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: 19

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

Our greatest challenge was responding to the Türkiye Earthquake. Nearly every team member had friends, relatives, or loved ones affected by the disaster. Despite their personal concerns, more than 400 members engaged in rescue operations, balancing the emotional weight of ensuring their loved ones were safe while tirelessly working to save lives in the field.



Current Full Capacity: 25 Personnel
Total Number of International USAR Deployments to
Date: 11 Total

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN OUR TEAMS HISTORY

As a volunteer-based NGO, we are proud to have contributed to the creation of the INSARAG Light team classification and subsequently becoming the third team in the world to achieve this honour.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AS A TEAM

We are proud to have made a significant contribution to the development of the Damage Assessment Coordination Cell (DACC) system following successful implementation of the concept on deployments in Albania (2019), Beirut (2020) and Haiti (2021).

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

The establishment of the IEC as a single globally recognised standard ensures that USAR teams can work

together efficiently and collaboratively, ultimately saving more lives during disasters.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

In 20 years, the INSARAG Network will continue to be an innovative and highly integrated global system by adapting to climate change and an evolving geopolitical landscape. It will continue to set the gold standard for USAR operations and lead the way in saving lives and reducing suffering worldwide
„Be the change you want to see in the world“



SARAID.org



<https://www.instagram.com/saraid.usar/>

CYP-01 CYPRUS "LIGHT"

45 Personnel

<http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/cd/cd.nsf/home/home?op=enform>

AZE-01 AZERBAIJAN "MEDIUM"

Current Full Capacity: 50 personnel

Total Number of International USAR Deployments to Date: None to date.



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INSARAG NETWORK

One of the most significant milestones of the INSARAG community is the creation of a well-structured coordination system, which has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness in real-life emergencies, along with comprehensive and accessible guidelines and a rapid response framework.

porating specialized and classified units for firefighting and water-based rescue operations.

THE FUTURE OF INSARAG

Looking ahead 20 years, we expect the INSARAG network to have expanded further, incor-





EPILOGUE

As this chapter comes to an end, we recognize the dedication of the INSARAG teams. These professionals are not only highly skilled but also consistently step up to face some of the toughest challenges in order to save lives. Their expertise, commitment, and willingness to tackle difficult situations play a crucial role in the success of their mission.

The INSARAG community stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved when collaboration, compassion, and a shared purpose unite. Though diverse in culture and background, each team is bound by a single goal: to rescue those in need and restore hope in the face of disaster. The seamless, effective cooperation seen across this global network is no accident. It is the result of the carefully crafted INSARAG guidelines—refined and perfected to ensure that teams can work together, no matter the location or circumstances. These guidelines form the bedrock of trust, coordination, and efficiency, empowering teams to focus on what matters most: saving lives.

Over the last decades, these teams have done more than just save lives. They have mentored and trained the next generations of rescuers, ensuring that the system has been able to renew itself again and again. This continuous cycle of growth and learning has allowed the impact of rescue teams to thrive and evolve. The knowledge shared, the bonds forged, and the experiences gained have made the entire community stronger and more resilient, ready to face whatever challenges lie ahead. As we look toward the future, the challenges of climate change are pushing the INSARAG network to develop new solutions and approaches. In this truly global network, the aim is to ensure that all regions, regardless of their resources or location, can respond with equal effectiveness, reinforcing the strength and unity of the global rescue effort.

To the future teams: You are part of a global network of dedicated individuals working to save lives and improve safety. Your efforts will shape the future of rescue operations, and with the guidance of INSARAG's principles, you will help maintain a lasting legacy of cooperation, resilience, and hope.

THE FOUNDATION OF INSARAG: CREATING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 57/150

The chaotic response to the Spitak, Armenia earthquake of 1988, in which both primarily European responders and those from the Soviet Union responded, led to the creation of The International Search And Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) as an attempt to improve the international response to earthquakes. The initial meeting was held in Breuggen, Germany, in 1991, primarily attended by some Western European countries and the US. It set itself the task of developing a set of Guidelines and Methodology for international urban search and rescue. A call for some sort of legal framework or “USAR Convention” was also made during the initial 1991 meeting. A ‘legal framework’ was deemed necessary because the response to the Armenian earthquake showed that there was no clarity on speedy access to an affected area as a result of Customs, immigration, overflight, visa, equipment import type of issues. The planning figure for the chances of a live rescue in a collapsed structure is 96 hours. Beyond that time the chances of an individual surviving are minimal so delays in border entry and movement inside the country reduce the chances of saving lives. This demand for a Convention languished in the background throughout the 1990s.

I took over as Secretary of INSARAG in 1998. The INSARAG Secretariat consisted of two people i.e. Thomas Peter and myself located in the Field Coordination Support Unit of the Disaster Response Branch of OCHA Geneva which was led by Gerhard Putman-Cramer who was very supportive of us. At that time INSARAG barely registered on the international scene as it was a small group of primarily German speaking DACH countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) and the US. There were no Regional Groups. Its primary achievement till then was the creation of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team and the initial version of the INSARAG Guidelines which were first published in 1998 as a set of separate Guidelines for different facets of USAR functioning based mainly on DACH practices.

There was also a significant body of opinion within INSARAG that it should broaden its mandate to include all relief activities and be renamed International Disaster Response Advisory Group (INDIRAG) and expand its

activities to cover all aspects of disaster response. Finally in the INSARAG Steering Committee meeting held in Neusiedl, Austria in September 1999 it was decided not to do so. This was fortunate as it would have resulted in the inevitable decline of INSARAG since the greatest strength of INSARAG lies in the fact that it is focused on its core competency of USAR which is a highly technical collapsed structure life saving rescue activity. INDIRAG would have inevitably led to overlap with other established humanitarian agencies/entities and the consequent turf battles.

Urban Search and Rescue after an earthquake is an immediate response tool that is both diplomatically effective and media friendly. It is very useful to both responding and affected Governments. There is no doubt that the multiple 1999 earthquakes (Colombia, Greece, Taiwan, Türkiye), especially the two Türkiye earthquakes, were the trigger for the process that led to UN GA Resolution 57/150 and the global acceptance of INSARAG and its methodology. The 1999 earthquakes again brought the issues of access, coordination, and common operational practices to the fore resulting in a collective demand for something to be done about it. The problems in the provision of international SAR assistance lay basically in two areas. One was speed of deployment. It is worth recalling that at this time most international USAR capacity was located in Europe, so deploying elsewhere in the world was a time consuming business. The probability of finding earthquake victims alive drops dramatically after 96 hours from the disaster, therefore, all obstacles that may come in the way of the quickest deployment of SAR teams needed to be removed. These included granting of visas, customs procedures for the import of equipment and drugs, dog quarantine requirements and air space utilisation. Another problem area was the qualification of international SAR teams. Experience showed that ill-equipped or poorly trained teams, with little or no self-sufficiency, end up being an additional burden for the affected country rather than a resource. Also, the presence of dozens of international SAR teams operating at the same time, and the fact that the local administration was normally severely affected, called for strong international coordination structures on site to function in support of the local authorities. As Thomas Peter is quoted as having said in

1999 after one of the earthquakes. "SAR teams must be professionally trained and equipped, well organised and committed to working in a coordinated fashion. We don't want Johnny and his dog to show up at the airport with no appropriate equipment, little or no training and experience, and complaining, after six hours, that the Army has not pitched his tent yet..." "There was a build-up of frustration amongst the USAR teams that extraneous factors were getting in the way of their fast deployment and thereby reducing their chances of saving lives. Therefore, a 'legal framework' or 'USAR Convention' sounded a good idea to the mainly European members of INSARAG and was the demand at the Lessons Learnt meeting after the 1999 Türkiye earthquakes, held in Germany to address the problems in deploying USAR teams internationally.

The establishment of a USAR Convention was recommended by the UN Secretary General in his report to ECOSOC in 2000. Thereafter, Mr. Toni Frisch, then Chairman of INSARAG, wrote in early December 2000 to USAR focal points in some 24 countries inviting participation in a "Core Group" of countries expected to support the project of creating a 'USAR Convention' with knowledge and/or financial resources. Simultaneously OCHA sent an information note to Foreign Ministers of the same 24 Countries regarding this project

The proposed USAR Convention project outlined in these communications included an exploratory phase, of the duration of three months and aiming at the establishment of the Core Group, and a second phase, conditional on the successful establishment of the Core Group aiming at the drafting of the document and at the mobilisation of political support leading eventually to the establishment of the Convention.

The exploratory phase was considered successfully concluded when, on 22 and 23 February 2001, some 40 representatives from 18 countries, the United Nations and from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) convened in the Palais des Nations in Geneva for the first meeting of the states supporting the establishment of an International Urban Search and Rescue Convention.

The first two meetings of the Core Group in February and May 2001 worked on a draft for a legally binding Convention. However, by October 2001 it became fairly clear that the Governments of most countries were extremely unlikely to accept any binding legal framework that would involve ratification and amendment of their own laws which would be necessary for it to be a legally

binding. In the February 2002 meeting, based on the advice of the INSARAG Secretariat, the Core Group unanimously decided to go for a UN General Assembly Resolution instead of a Convention since a UN GA Resolution was 'soft law' and did not need domestic ratification by Member States. Overall 35 countries participated in the Core Group and finally took a wise decision to go for the achievable i.e. a UN GA Resolution rather than the ideal, a legally binding Convention. The Government of Türkiye was the prime mover and driving force behind the drafting and passage of this UN GA resolution. Its role cannot be overstated, both in Geneva and in New York. The main person who ensured the Government of Türkiye's support and leading role was Mr Serhat Aksen who was in the Mission of Türkiye to the UN in Geneva at that time. He participated in all the meetings and tirelessly lobbied his colleagues from other country Missions in Geneva on this issue. Other countries which were quite supportive and took a lot of interest were Switzerland, the Netherlands, Japan and the US. Switzerland and Netherlands were the first to contribute financially to assist this project. Dewey Perks and Nancy Kyloh of the US were most instrumental in getting the US Government on board which definitely helped in the passage of the GA Resolution. Ultimately 35 countries participated in the Core Group in Geneva including developing countries such as Iran and India which eased passage of the GA Resolution later in New York. Christopher Lamb, the Head of the Advocacy Section of IFRC attended all meetings of the Core Group. He was very supportive of the initiative and did his bit by raising awareness of this initiative with National Red Cross/Crescent societies.

There were some interesting moments during the drafting of the GA Resolution because the collective good had to be kept in mind rather than national interests. Most discussion focused on the strength of the wording as we had to strike a balance between effective, strong wording and the likelihood of Member States balking at such words. Also, there was a lot of discussion on how to ensure that the New York diplomats, who were not involved in the drafting done in Geneva, would not change the draft resolution in such a way as to weaken it significantly. Ultimately it boiled down to effective awareness raising within the Foreign Ministries of Governments and their Missions in New York.

I remember during one meeting Mr. Toshimitsu Ishigure of Japan who was the senior Japanese representative to the Core Group made a very profound and telling remark to me in which he said words to the effect that this was the first time when he was negotiating an inter-

national text where he had also to consider common interest rather than exclusively Japanese interests. This indicated the very collaborative and cooperative spirit in which the negotiations took place.

In ways we did not recognize till much later the international environment was very favourable to us. The multiple earthquakes of 1999 had raised public awareness of USAR and also ensured that Governments suddenly realized the public relations and diplomatic utility of being able to respond overseas with USAR teams in a time frame of hours in a world where TV news had come into its own. Additionally, 9/11 had made collapsed structure rescue an issue with solid public backing around the world.

Once the draft was ready in Geneva, the action shifted to New York and on 4 June 2002 Türkiye called and chaired a preliminary meeting for representatives of country Missions in New York to elicit their support for this draft GA Resolution. Türkiye had a lot of sympathy and support on earthquake response because of the two 1999 earthquakes which caused significant damage and loss of life in Türkiye, so when it threw its weight behind this issue and sponsored the GA Resolution, it made the passage smoother. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Alper Coskun, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN in New York and attended by approximately 40 representatives from Missions in New York, Government officials from capitals and IFRC. Dewey Perks and I briefed this meeting at the United Nations. The draft got approved by the representatives to be placed before the 57th General Assembly in spite of a minor hiccup when the fire alarm went off in the meeting room during the meeting and we had to scramble to ensure people did not rush out of the room and abort the meeting. The Turkish Government introduced the GA Resolution in the UN General Assembly co-sponsored by 49 other countries. On 16 December 2002, the 57th UN General Assembly unanimously approved UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance".

The beneficial effects of having 57/150 on the work of INSARAG cannot be overstated. It gave INSARAG and its Secretariat a master key to open doors in Governments. Most Governments are allergic to outsiders (including the UN) telling them how to do something. However, in this case once they were informed that they themselves have signed up for it in a UN GA Resolution, the 'ownership' issue is resolved. Besides, a UN GA Resolution is much more effective and acceptab-

le to Governments because there is no element of law or coercion in it. The resolution is also drafted in such a way that it endorses the INSARAG Guidelines which can nevertheless be revised. This has helped in ensuring widespread acceptance of the INSARAG Methodology and Guidelines around the world. It is very, very unlikely that we could have developed the IEC process which entails a foreign team assessing search and rescue team capacity in a sovereign country without being able to wave the GA Resolution at Governments. There are times I still marvel at as to how we managed to get such a UN GA Resolution passed from scratch in less than three years. Team work and the INSARAG stars were aligned right!



ARJUN KATOCH

Former Chief, Field Coordination Support Section, and Secretary of INSARAG, UN OCHA (1999-2009)

After 2009, he was an advisor to the governments of Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar on emergency response issues. In recognition of his contributions to international emergency response, he was awarded medals from the governments of Russian Federation and Abu Dhabi



