



## The role of foreign militaries in disaster response

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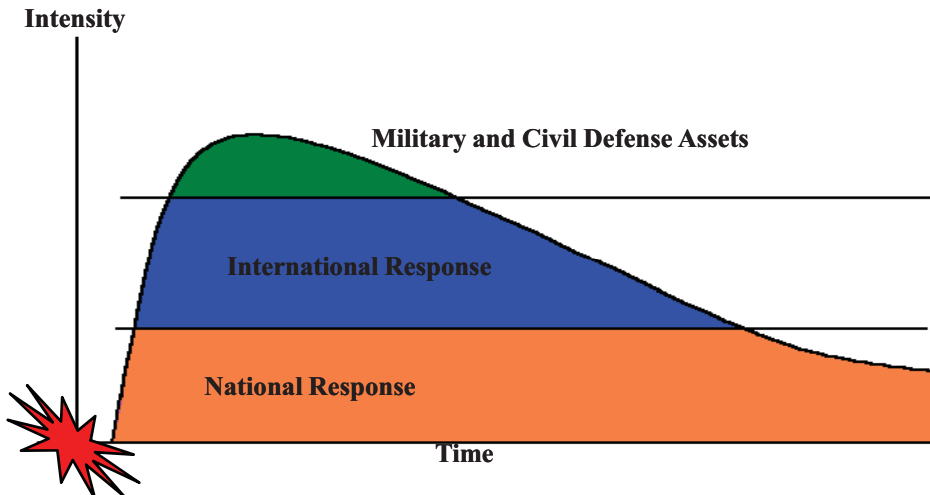
## Foreign military assets in disaster

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- Militaries are often among ‘first responders’ in Asia and the Pacific in large scale disaster situations.
- They can provide essential resources and support to the affected country/region, population or humanitarian actors:
  - General manpower
  - Specialized experts (e.g. bridge/road engineers)
  - Heavy lift transport: aircraft, vehicles, ships
  - Logistics systems
  - Relief items & equipment



## Military and civil defence assets in disaster relief



## Differences between military and civilian approaches

### ▪ Information Sharing

- Intelligence versus Information
- Classification versus Transparency

### ▪ Task Sharing

- Design of Military versus Civilian Units
- Availability versus Duration of Emergencies

### ▪ Joint Planning

- Compatibility of Tools
- Planning Processes and Cultures.



## Some key issues

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- Should / can militaries be doing 'humanitarian' work?
  - Do they have the skills?
  - What are their 'real' motives?
  - Are they familiar with good disaster management practices?
  - Can they be 'neutral & impartial'?
  
- When should military assets be used: as a 'last resort', or are they always or frequently needed?
  
- What impact does the involvement of militaries have on humanitarian space and the role of the RC?



## Some major international guidelines

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- The "Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief" (Oslo Guidelines), 1994 – revised 2006
  
- Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies, June 2004
  
- UN Civil-Military Coordination Concept, March 2005



## Oslo Guidelines

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- Adopted in 1994 following Rwanda Crisis, revised 2006
- Non-binding guidelines for States and a Model Agreement
- Natural, technological and environmental disasters
- In times of peace, assuming a stable state or government



## Oslo Guidelines

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- Cover the “use of military and civil defence resources requested by the UN humanitarian agencies and deployed under the UN control specifically to support humanitarian activities.”
- They “could also be used ...when considering the use of military and civil defence assets to provide assistance to civilian populations in natural and technological or environmental emergencies in times of peace”.



## Principles on the use of MCDA

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- ✓ At the request of, or with the consent of, the receiving state
- ✓ At no cost to the receiving state
- ✓ In support of local emergency management
- ✓ Needs-based, neutral and impartial
- ✓ Unarmed and in national uniform



## Principles on the use of MCDA

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### Complementarity

- Military and civil defence assets should **complement** existing relief mechanisms
- Provide specific support to specific requirements
- In response to **acknowledged humanitarian gap** in disaster needs/resources



## Other developments in Asia Pacific



**ARF- SOPS**  
**ARF – Model agreements**



**APC-MADRO,  
Guidelines**



**MPAT, MNF-SOPS**



**ASEAN, SASOPS**



**US Bilateral  
Agreements**



# Red Cross / Red Crescent and the Use of Military Assets in Disaster



## Guiding documents

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- The **Fundamental Principles** of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- **International humanitarian law** (IHL), especially the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols
- The **Statutes** of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- The **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief
- The **Principles and Rules** for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief
- The **Seville Agreement** and other Movement coordination mechanisms in force
- Other relevant **resolutions and regulations** of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and of the Council of Delegates, in particular on **armed escorts** and on the **use of the emblems** .
- **Guidance Document On Relations Of Components Of The Movement With Military Bodies**, Council Of Delegates, 16 - 18 November 2005



## RC Council of Delegates Decision, 2005

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*“The use of military assets by a component of the Movement – particularly in countries affected by armed conflict and/or strife or other violence – **should be a last resort**: it can be justified only by the serious and urgent need for life saving humanitarian action and when there is no alternative means of taking that action.*



*Such a serious decision must be taken by the senior leadership of the organisation concerned.*

*Any use of military assets should be prompted by needs rather than availability.”*



## Preserving Neutral and Independent Humanitarian Action (NIHA)

- To carry out its mission around the world the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement must maintain its neutrality and independence at all times.
- It's not enough to BE neutral and impartial, we must also be PERCEIVED by others to be neutral and independent.
- Failing to do so can put not only staff and volunteers at risk, but also jeopardises assistance reaching vulnerable people
- Eg. National RC Society relied on military transport to deliver disaster relief in peace time – when conflict broke out, they became a target for attack because they were perceived as being associated with the government and the military.



## NIHA and Civil Military Cooperation

- Civil defence and military assets can play an important role in disaster relief operations, in particular through the mobilisation of large-scale logistical support.
- However, it's important to distinguish between humanitarian and military resources and objectives
- Confusion can arise when:



Armed forces conduct combat and relief operations at the same time, using the same materials

Other actors use materials which are similar to those used for conducting combat operations

Civilian and military actors are operational at the same place and time for combat and relief operations with similar materials



## Federation POV on Relations with the Military

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### Objectives

- Ensure the continued application of humanitarian principles and policies as well as secure the humanitarian space in a world where military organisations are ever more engaged in natural disaster response
- Promote the understanding of the roles and work done by National Societies and the Federation in the disaster-aftermath situation, as well as
- Increase the military actors' acceptance of the RCRC principles and values for disaster relief to facilitate our work in the future.

### Action Points

- Implement policies
- Ensure specific field guidance
- Federation / ICRC "Special Note " to guide all Movement parties in relations with the military in specific scenarios.
- Actively participate in discussions or training where civil-military relations in natural disasters are being discussed.
- Enhance institutional and individual knowledge in the area of CMR through these trainings and meetings.