



**INSARAG**  
Preparedness Response

# This is **INSARAG**

**30 Years of Preparedness and Response -  
Anniversary Edition**

# COORDINATION SAVES LIVES

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) is a global network of more than 90 Member States and organisations under the United Nations umbrella.

INSARAG deals with Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) related issues and aims to establish minimum international standards for USAR teams and methodology for international coordination in earthquake response.



Photo: USA 2



Photo: Qatar International Search and Rescue Group

# VISION AND MISSION

## **OUR VISION**

The work of INSARAG is focused on saving lives by promoting efficiency, enhanced quality and coordination amongst national and international USAR teams based on adherence to common guidelines and methodologies.

## **OUR MISSION**

INSARAG prepares for, mobilizes and coordinates effective, principled and flexible international USAR assistance to countries affected by collapsed-structure emergencies.

# MANDATE

- » Render emergency preparedness and response activities more effective;
- » Promote activities designed to improve search and rescue preparedness in disaster-prone countries;
- » Develop internationally accepted procedures and systems for the sustained cooperation between national USAR teams operating on the international scene;
- » Improve efficiency in cooperation among international USAR teams working in collapsed structures at a disaster site.



# OUR ROLE IS TO:

- » Mobilize and coordinate information exchange protocols between relevant stakeholders;
- » Promote cooperation and share experience with partners at local, national, regional and international levels with

National Disaster Management Agencies from Member States, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the private sector, academia and other networks relevant to rapid response.

## INSARAG'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



### Quality Standards

Strengthening global standards to produce high quality national and international USAR responses.



### Localization

Enhancing frontline response coordination by localizing INSARAG methodology and concepts.



### Flexible Response

Ensuring a comprehensive and adaptable emergency response by promoting discussions on flexible approaches to additional rescue operations beyond USAR.



### Partnerships

Boosting and developing partnerships for sustainable participation, ownership and governance.

# VALUES AND OPERATIONAL NORMS

INSARAG's work is upheld by:

- » Adherence to common standards and methodology
- » Inclusiveness
- » Professionalism
- » Respect for diversity
- » Cultural sensitivity
- » Needs-driven assistance
- » Coordination
- » Predictability



Photo: Romanian SAR



Photo: Swiss Rescue



# QUALITY STANDARDS

In order to strengthen global standards for a high quality of national and international USAR response, the INSARAG network aims to:

» Emphasise the importance of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 on “Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search

and rescue assistance” and continue to update, evaluate and **improve INSARAG methodology** to be “*fit for purpose.*”

» Promote the **adoption and implementation** of INSARAG’s methodology for emergency preparedness and response by governments and USAR teams.

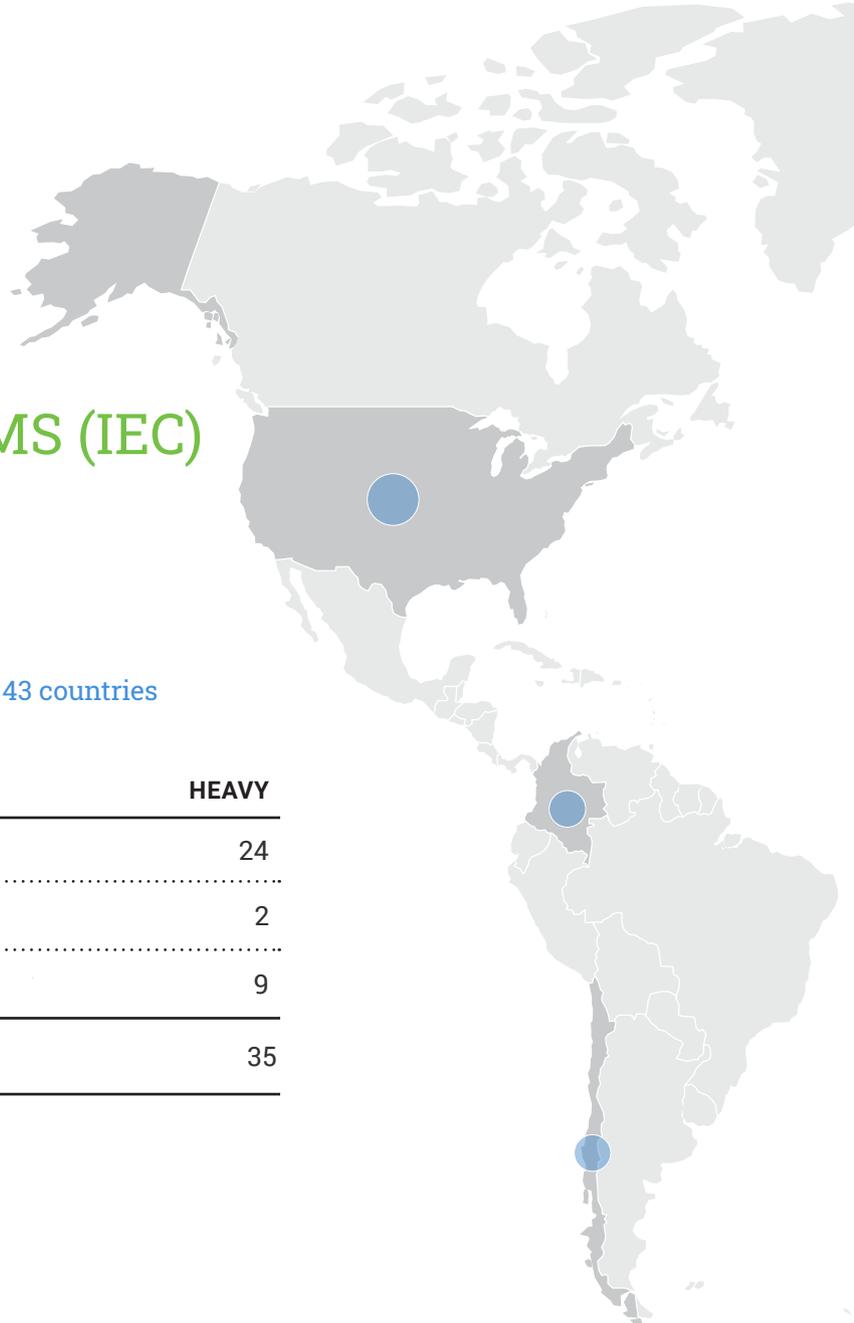


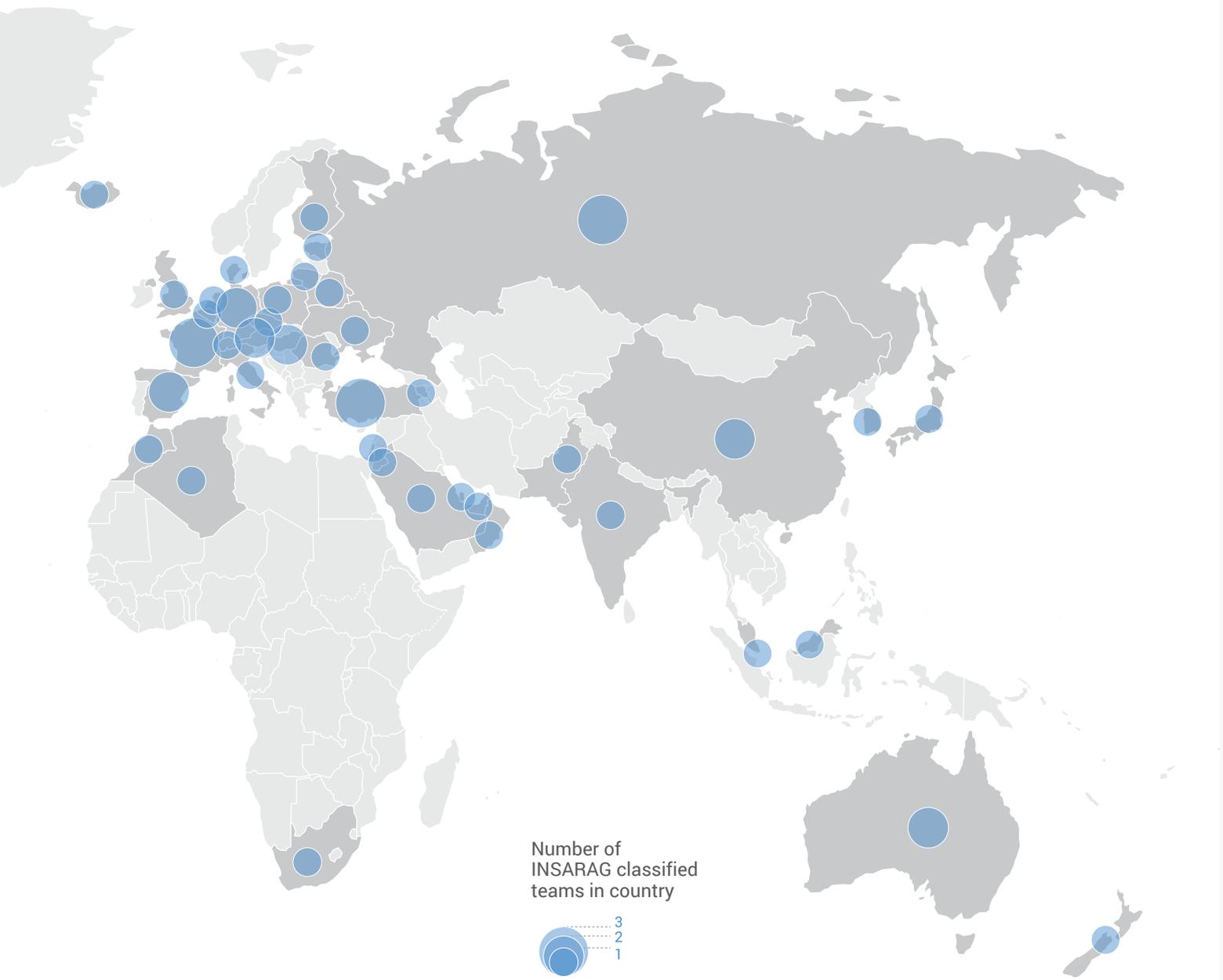
## INSARAG CLASSIFIED TEAMS (IEC)

AS OF 1 OCTOBER 2021

57 classified USAR teams active from 43 countries  
as of 2021

REGION	MEDIUM	HEAVY
AEME	18	24
Americas	2	2
Asia-Pacific	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>35</b>





*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*



Photo: UNICEF



# INSARAG EXTERNAL CLASSIFICATION

In a world where disaster response is becoming more complex, the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) system ensures that professional teams around the world are classified according to internationally accepted standards.

These teams are a model of efficient emergency response. Earthquake and disaster-affected countries know what type of assistance they can expect to receive from INSARAG-classified USAR teams.

Countries in need of international assistance are informed of the assistance each team can offer:

- » A professional response meeting the standards set by the INSARAG Guidelines.
- » Teams that speak a common USAR language.
- » Teams that will make a real difference in the life-saving phase of a disaster.



# LOCALIZATION

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the way that responders operate and has once more highlighted the importance of a localized approach to disaster preparedness and response. It is crucial that Member States continue to improve

the effectiveness of frontline emergency response coordination by adapting, localizing and incorporating the INSARAG standards and methodology into their disaster preparedness and response plans as well as into their national and international training programmes.







# LOCALIZATION

INSARAG promotes localisation by:

- » Enhancing the effectiveness of **frontline emergency response coordination** by adapting the INSARAG coordination methodology and concepts to local contexts.
- » Advocating for **national and regional involvement in** preparedness and coordination efforts.
- » Actively **encouraging innovative approaches, sharing of expertise and good practices amongst countries and organizations for national capacity building for the stronger coordination** of national and international USAR assistance.
- » Promoting **capacity development** at national and local levels and improving **community preparedness**.



# LOCALIZATION

## **NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

The USAR response framework of INSARAG is a structure that is designed to ensure **interoperability** between different levels of USAR response. The framework maintains that “it is vital that working practices, technical language, and information are common and shared through all levels of the USAR response framework”. For this reason, the standards developed for the

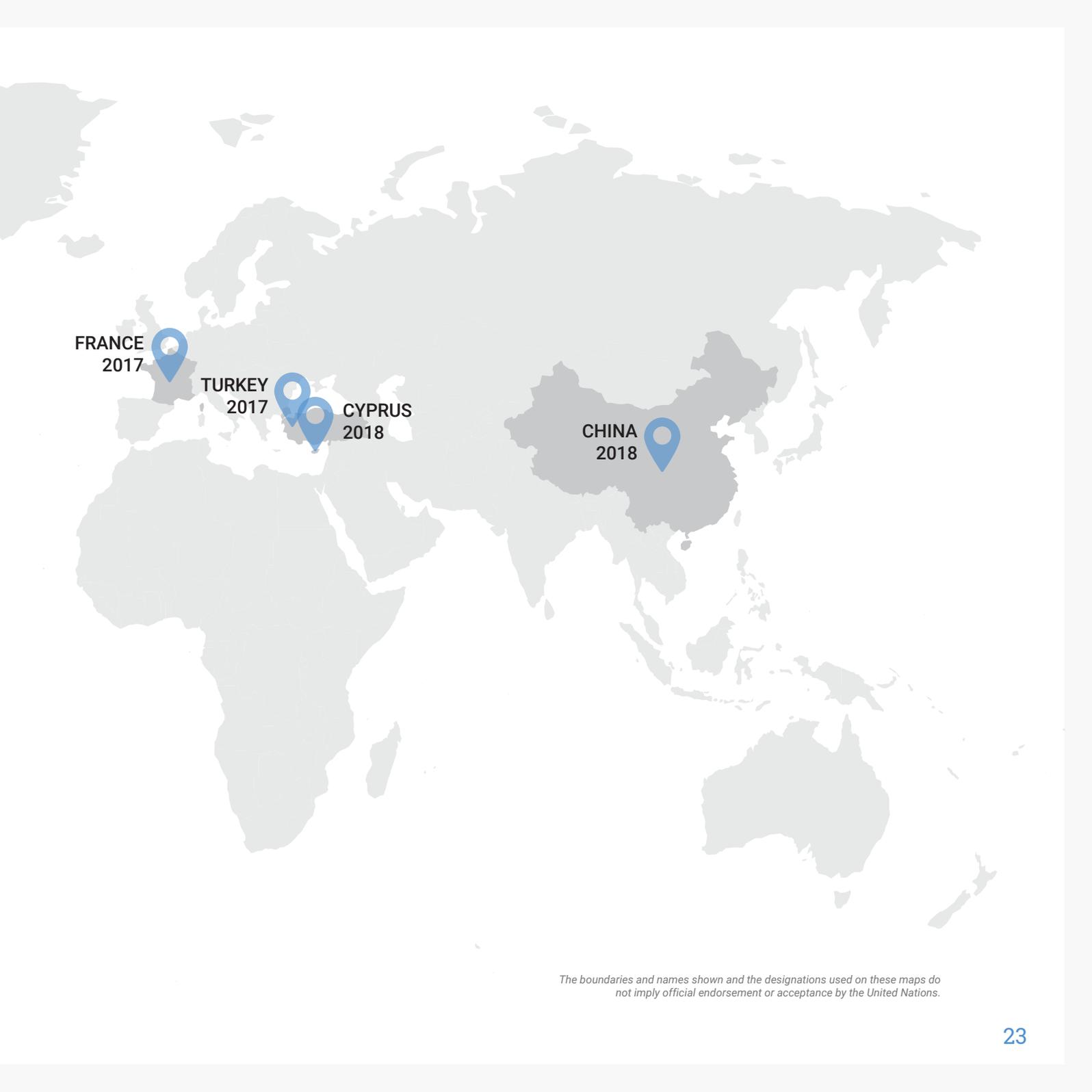
accreditation of national teams **must be aligned with** the INSARAG methodology and should therefore be recognized within this same framework.

GUATEMALA  
2019



COLOMBIA  
2018



A world map showing the locations of four specific events. France (2017) is marked with a blue location pin in Western Europe. Turkey (2017) is marked with a blue location pin in the Balkans region. Cyprus (2018) is marked with a blue location pin in the Eastern Mediterranean. China (2018) is marked with a blue location pin in East Asia. The map is rendered in a light gray color scheme.

FRANCE  
2017

TURKEY  
2017

CYPRUS  
2018

CHINA  
2018

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Photo: CoEm Vigili del fuoco/HUSAR ITA-1



# FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

While INSARAG teams provide specialised Urban Search and Rescue services, flexibility in response operations across other search and rescue activities and beyond is also important in order to respond to emerging challenges. INSARAG aims to adapt to changing contexts whilst continuing to maintain the high quality of its core services.



# FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

INSARAG promotes flexible response by:

» **Promoting flexibility** of rescue teams in response operations across other disaster relief activities. Given the increase in extreme weather-related disasters requiring assistance beyond conventional USAR operations, the Flexible Response Working Group aims to ensure the future

sustainability of USAR assets at national and international levels and to stay relevant to the needs of the affected people.

» **Promoting new ways** to be functional in challenging circumstances, such as the COVID-19 crisis, to be ready when disasters strike, and to stay fit for purpose in an evolving operational environment.



Photo: PUI



Photo: Swiss Rescue



# FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the INSARAG network has faced unprecedented challenges and continues to adapt to be fit for purpose. **The Flexible Response Working Group was created to facilitate further discussions to develop INSARAG's Flexible Response concepts.**

The Flexible Response Working Group has an extended mandate that includes:

- » The development of the **Beyond the Rubble (BtR) phase** of the USAR response.
- » The establishment of the **Damage Assessment Coordination Center (DACC)**.
- » **Support to cultural heritage preservation during a response**, based on the guidance of specialized organizations such as UNESCO and their operational partners.



# PARTNERSHIPS

In order to develop partnerships for sustainable participation, ownership, and governance, INSARAG aims to:

- » Promote a broader **outreach and increased engagement with new relevant partners** in preparation for a collective response in case of disasters;
- » Strengthen collaboration and coordination, expand **established technical partnerships** and harness the **teamwork of national expert members** for effective coordination and better preparedness.

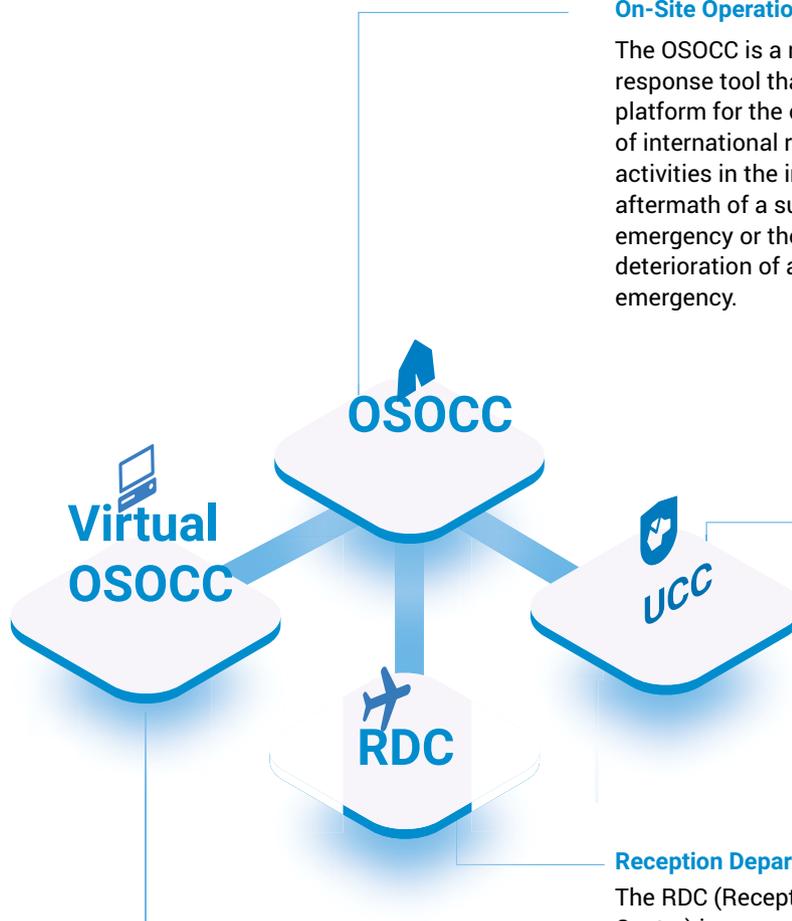


Photo: Poland USAR team/ Piotr Zwarycz

# INSARAG's Tools

INSARAG and OCHA initially developed the OSOCC (On-Site Operations Coordination Centre) to assist affected countries in coordinating international USAR

efforts following an earthquake. Today, the OSOCC is a valuable tool in any sudden-onset disaster or complex emergency requiring the on-site coordination of international relief resources in the absence of other existing coordination systems.



### On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC)

The OSOCC is a rapid response tool that provides a platform for the coordination of international response activities in the immediate aftermath of a sudden-onset emergency or the rapid deterioration of a complex emergency.

The OSOCC:

- Facilitates on-site cooperation, coordination, and information management between international responders and the government of the affected country in the absence of an alternate coordination system.
- Establishes a physical space and acts as a single point of service provision for incoming response teams.

### USAR Coordination Cell (UCC)

The UCC is a cell within the OSOCC. The UCC makes contact with other appropriate agencies or authorities and maintains contact with the RDC to obtain updated data about USAR teams already in the country and incoming USAR teams.

### Reception Departure Centre (RDC)

The RDC (Reception Departure Centre) is generally the first OSOCC component established in-country during a major emergency and thus the first on-site coordination point. It facilitates the arrival of international relief teams and assists in coordinating their deployment to the affected areas. The RDC is also

equipped to receive resources such as relief items.

RDC operations are focused on:

- Briefing arriving teams on the evolving emergency situation.
- Providing arriving teams with information related to practicalities such as logistical support, airport/port procedures and services, security and the OSOCC location.

**The Virtual OSOCC** is an online coordination tool for disaster response professionals. In the initial phase of the response to major natural disasters, it is essential to share information between OHCA, disaster management agencies, UNDAC and USAR teams, foreign medical teams and national, regional and international authorities.

# INSARAG MEMBERS

INSARAG members are part of a worldwide knowledge-sharing network on collapsed-structure rescue and operational field coordination.

They are invited to annual meetings of their INSARAG Regional Group and to participate in INSARAG Working Groups.

Their responsibilities include:

- » Conducting damage and needs assessments as quickly as possible.
- » Providing information updates and making requests on the Virtual OSOCC.
- » Designating a government entity with the unique responsibility of coordinating international relief activities.
- » Specifying and prioritizing the nature of the assistance required.
- » Facilitating immigration procedures for international relief personnel.



Photo: OCHA

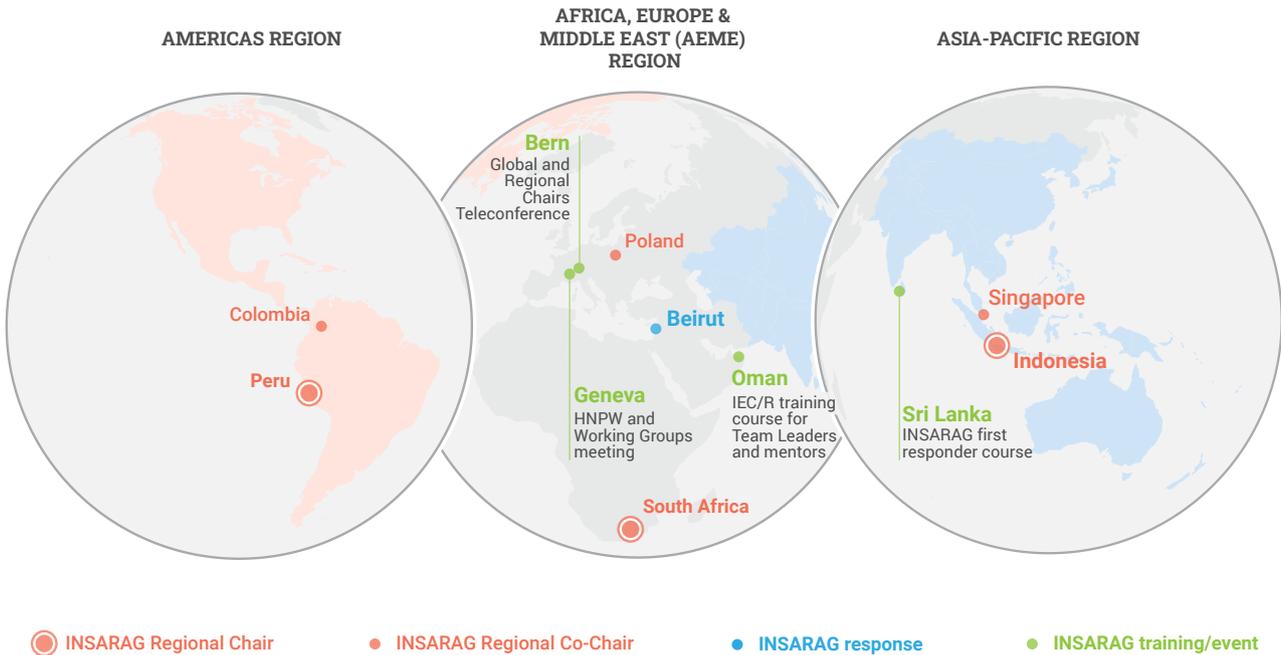
Swedish Civil

# THE INSARAG NETWORK

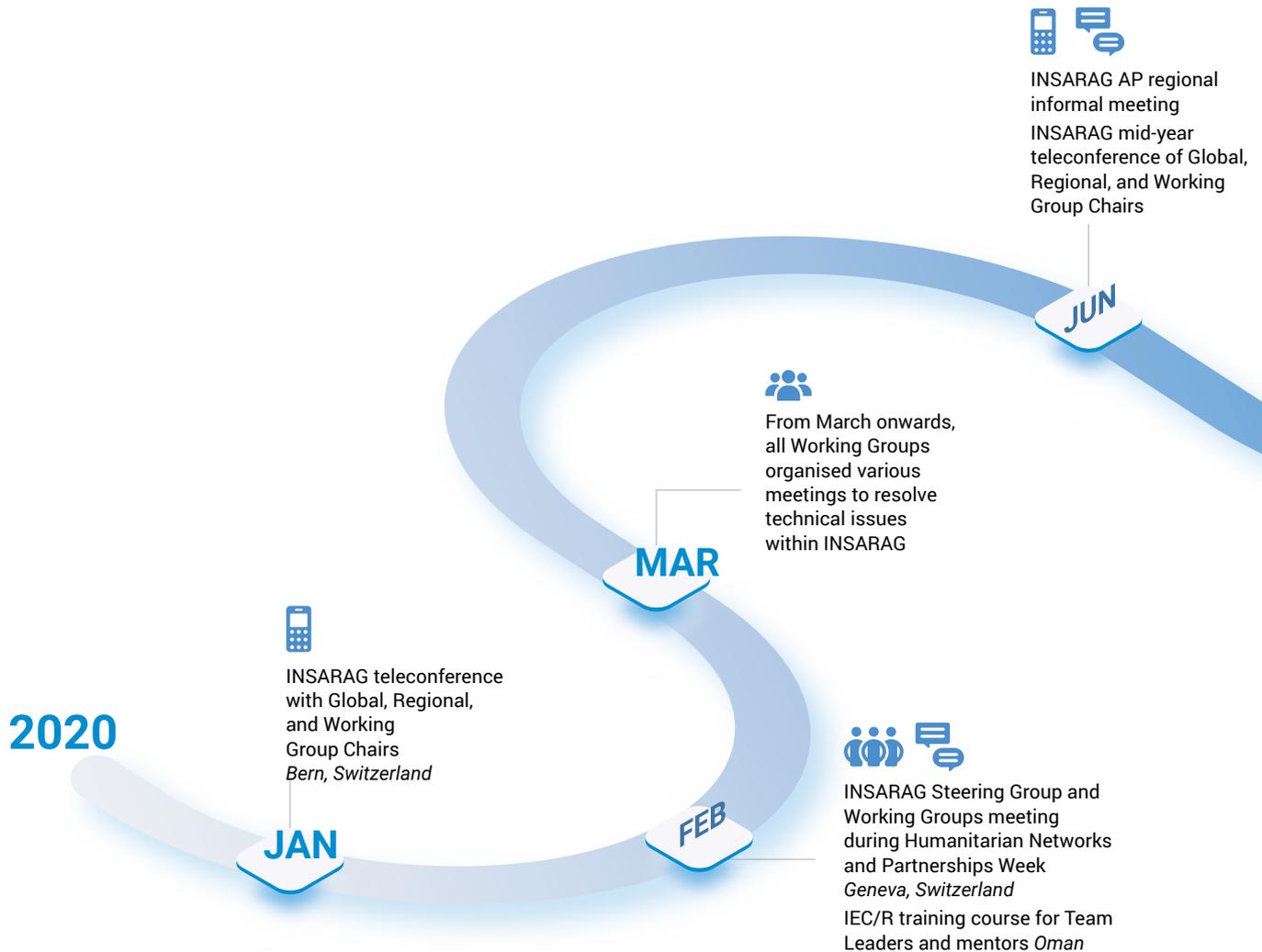
INSARAG is composed of a **Steering Group, three Regional Groups**, and the **Secretariat**, as well as the **USAR Team Leaders** and the **Working Groups**. This structure ensures that INSARAG's aims can be achieved at a regional level, and that the aims are in line with good practices defined and agreed on by the global network.



**INSARAG BY LOCATION**



# 2020 Highlights





Asia-Pacific regional group meeting  
 Americas Regional Group meeting  
 ASEAN senior executive programme in disaster management  
 Webinar on INSARAG Guidelines 2020

OCT



Technical After-Action Review (AAR) following the Beirut port explosion  
*Online*

NOV



INSARAG presentation at emergency medical team global call meeting  
 INSARAG webinar by BASARNAS  
*Indonesia*

SEP



National responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

JUL

AUG



INSARAG response to the Beirut explosion  
 First National Accreditation working group meeting  
*Online*

DEC



INSARAG new Guidelines launch webinar (led by the Guidelines Review Group)  
 National response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the *Republic of Korea*

# INSARAG's response to the Beirut port explosion

After the explosion at the port of Beirut in August 2020, 13 USAR teams from 10 countries were immediately deployed through the European Union (EU) to support search and rescue operations. For the first time, the INSARAG Coordination and Management System (ICMS) was operationalised, and the Damage Assessment Coordination Centre (DACC) was established in support of local authorities.

The response to the Beirut port explosion has shed light on the solidarity that binds member states together. It has also demonstrated the value of the professional collaborations between national responders in a large-scale emergency and the INSARAG Secretariat, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, the OCHA country office, OCHA headquarters, and the EU.



Photo: OCHA

# INSARAG's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had strong repercussions on INSARAG's work. Nevertheless, the network remained fit for purpose by continuing to serve people in need and focusing on strengthening localization and supporting disaster response remotely.

On 4 May 2021, INSARAG produced the Joint Statement between its Medical Working Group and the Emergency Medical

Team (EMT) Initiative by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The statement identifies new priorities for field response teams considering international deployment during the COVID-19 pandemic, calling on the teams to abide by the pandemic regulations of the affected country, and encourages the vaccination of international responders.









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