

Checklist and Non-Binding Guidelines for the Request, Reception and Provision Of International Assistance in the Event of a CBRN Incident or Natural Disaster

I. Introduction

1. Nations are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of preparing for large scale disasters which may require them to request international assistance. Due to climate change and the ongoing risk of terrorist attacks, nations that usually provide assistance to others could find themselves in the same situation, being forced to ask for assistance, bilaterally, regionally or via international organisations like the EADRCC at NATO.
2. The non-binding guidelines are provided for national preparedness in requesting and receiving international assistance and should be used by emergency planners and managers at operational level.
3. Documentation from NATO bodies and international organisations were used as a basis for the guidelines and the checklist. Both the Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civilian Defence Assets (MCDA) and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Guidelines form the basis for the checklist for requesting and receiving international assistance.

II. Considerations for the Preparatory Phase of Disaster Response

Organisational Planning

4. Based on lessons learned following Hurricane Katrina it is important that nations formulate a comprehensive plan for the management of international assistance in the event that such a request is made. This plan should cover: which Ministries and Agencies are responsible for what aspects in the receipt of international assistance; how international assistance will be incorporated into the national disaster response effort; and whether there is an organisation or agency that will specifically coordinate the various activities of international actors.

Temporary Domestic Legal Status

5. Nations should consider the following arrangements concerning financial liability issues with regard to international disaster relief personnel:
 - 5.1. Little legal provision exists in the international realm for the status of international disaster relief personnel. Legal studies should be conducted into the matter, preferably in cooperation with other international organisations, to avoid duplication of effort.
 - 5.2. Nations should be prepared to ensure that assisting countries and relevant international organisations are provided temporary authorization to legally operate on their territory so as to enjoy the rights, inter alia, to open bank accounts, enter into contracts

and leases, acquire and dispose of property and instigate legal proceedings, for the purpose of providing disaster assistance.

5.3. Both the requesting nation and providing nations and/or international organisations should agree on waiving any claim for compensation in the event of damage done to property¹ by a member of an international disaster relief team during the provision of international assistance.

6. Above arrangements should not be valid in the event that damage was caused wilfully or by way of gross negligence and this should be established by a Court of the requesting nation.

Border Crossing

7. Nations are encouraged to sign and implement the Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of Vital Cross-Border Transport.

8. In order to facilitate the nature and quality of assistance provided, the requesting nation should already be aware of national laws and constraints, etc. relevant to the entry of international relief personnel, goods and equipment so that they can then be communicated to other nations in the event of an international request for assistance.

Finance

9. In general, the costs of international disaster relief assistance should lie where they fall. If the requesting nation is able and willing to pay for the assistance received and/or the assisting nation cannot donate its assistance, the cost should be clearly stated from the outset and be proportionate, in compliance with international standards and prices.

Telecommunications

10. The Tampere Convention establishes procedures for the request, provision and conditioning, payment of reimbursement, and termination of telecommunications assistance. These can be useful guidelines for the provision of this kind of international disaster relief assistance when mitigating the effects of a natural disaster.

11. It is important that the international assistance operation should be granted the right to unrestricted communication by radio (including satellite, mobile and hand held radio), telephone, telegraph, facsimile or any other means, and of establishing the necessary facilities to maintain communications with and within the locations of the international assistance operation, including the provision of radio frequencies upon entry by the requesting nation to the assisting nations/international organisations.

Military and Security

12. Should foreign military capabilities be requested, nations should have in place procedures covering: terms and conditions of deployment, whether the military may be

¹ Including damage caused to the environment during the disaster relief operation.

armed or not, use of national uniforms and mechanisms for cooperation with civil actors of the requesting nation.

13. Assisting nations should ensure that any military or security-focused relief teams guard against public confusion as to the distinction between their roles and those of humanitarian organisations. Pursuant to the Oslo Guidelines, military or security-focused teams should generally avoid providing direct (i.e. face-to-face) assistance to affected persons and instead focus on indirect or infrastructure support.

Press and Media Policy

14. Based on the Budapest Guidelines II², the requesting nations should make use of the media to communicate with the public in coordination with the international relief personnel. The teams provided by assisting nations should coordinate all their media-related actions with the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA). All NATO statements on behalf of NATO may only be made by NATO itself.

III. Considerations during the Disaster Response Phase

Assessment and Request

15. The requesting nation should make a rapid assessment to determine whether international assistance is required in light of the needs created by the disaster and domestic capabilities for response.

16. Consideration should be given to the involvement of international actors in the assessment process. If the nation is unable to conduct an assessment there are various international agencies able to assist including United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) with its focus on natural disasters, and NATO's RRT teams and civil experts, as well as teams from other international organisations. If required, a formal request for assessment teams and/or assistance should be issued³.

Equipment and Goods/ Transport related Issues

17. In accordance with the IDRL Guidelines, all actors involved, i.e. the requesting nation, the originating nations, as well as transit nations should:

17.1. Exempt goods and equipment requested by the stricken/requesting nation that are necessary for the disaster relief and initial recovery after the incident from all custom duties, taxes, tariffs or any governmental fees;

17.2. Exempt them from all export, transit and import restrictions;

17.3. Simplify and minimize documentation requirements for export, transit and import;

17.4. Permit the re-exportation of the goods and equipments used, in the event that the assisting nations wish to retain what they originally own;

² A Practical Guide to Public Information during a Crisis (Budapest Guidelines II), Civil Protection Committee Ad Hoc Group on Public Information Policy (2006).

³ See EADRCC Urgent Disaster Assistance Request

17.5. Waive or reduce inspection requirements. Where this is difficult, utilise pre-clearance processes where possible to clear relief goods and equipment more rapidly;

17.6. Arrange for inspection and release outside business hours and/or at a place outside the customs office, to avoid unnecessary delay.

Personnel

18. The stricken/requesting nation should provide for the time necessary to carry out the disaster relief assistance:

18.1. All necessary visa and work permits to the assisting personnel, renewable within its territory for as long as needed;

18.2. Recognize temporarily the relevant professional qualifications of assisting experts, such as medical personnel, architects, engineers;

18.3. Recognize temporarily all necessary certificates and qualifications needed for the conduct of their work, such as driver's licenses.

Quality of Assistance

19. Assisting nations/international organisations should ensure that the assistance they provide meets international quality standards, including the INSARAG Guidelines and the Sphere Minimum Standards⁴. Assistance should be provided by competent and trained staff, on the basis of needs, without discrimination. Care should be taken not to undermine the role or capacities of domestic responders.

20. Stricken nations should ensure that approved humanitarian organisations are provided access to communities requiring assistance.

Base of Operations Requirements

21. The INSARAG guidelines have outlined the needs, requirements and demands for a base camp⁵. Nations are advised to use the guidelines and methodology in their preparedness phase, taking into account the base operation requirements, such as access to water, electrical power and sewerage; access for cars and trucks; closeness to the disaster site; area with 4000m² – dry, flat, demarcation and overlooking/survey possibilities. The requirements are further divided into security, catering and social contact, hygiene, sleep/rest and recreation, working places, parking lot and storage area.

22. With reference to the INSARAG guidelines, the requesting nation should take appropriate measures to address the safety and security of personnel of the assisting nations/international organisations and of the locations, facilities, means of transport, equipment and goods used in connection with the international assistance provided by them.

⁴ Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response Handbook, The Sphere Project (2004), Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) and InterAction with VOICE and ICVA.

⁵ INSARAG Guidelines Version May 2007. F8.6 Base of Operations Requirements. Page 62-63.

Checklist for the Request, Reception and Provision Of International Assistance

The Request

Checklist for the Requesting Nation	Considerations for the Assisting Nation
<p>1. Assessment of need: Assessment of the situation determining whether international assistance is required, and what form this assistance must take.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to involving international actors in the relief operation. 	
<p>2. Request: The requesting nation should make a formal request for international assistance consisting of the following aspects⁶:</p> <p>2.1 Description of the emergency, as detailed as possible, based on the information available to the national authorities including date, type and nature of disaster, extent of damage, location;</p> <p>2.2 Types of assistance needed, such as expertise, services, manpower, equipment, goods;</p> <p>2.3 Limitations and considerations; For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • types of assistance that cannot be accepted, • what resources are already engaged by the stricken nation, • information about certain national laws and constraints etc. relevant to the entry of international relief personnel, goods and equipment. <p>2.4 Point of Contact in the stricken nation, the name of the responsible authority, contact details and operating hours (possibly extended to 24/7)</p> <p>2.5 Points of Entry in the stricken nation (i.e. airport, seaport, road border crossing), and if different the point of delivery of the international assistance; Statement whether there will be a Reception and Departure Centre (RDC) established for foreign teams, and its location;</p> <p>2.6 Dissemination: Statement as to which international/regional organisations and nations this request has been forwarded, what mechanisms are involved and whether the EADRCC the main clearing house.</p> <p>2.7 Finance: Specification if the requesting assistance has to be a donation or can be a paid service.</p>	<p>Request: International assistance should only be provided with the consent of the stricken nation and on the basis of a formal request.</p> <p>Types: The assisting nation should be clear about what they are able to provide, at what point in time and for how long.</p> <p>Limitations and Considerations should be strongly taken into account when preparing the provision of assistance to the requesting nation. Is disaster assistance provided on the basis of need and without discrimination? Are international quality standards (such as the INSARAG Guidelines and Sphere Standards) observed?</p> <p>Point of Contact: be it strategic and/or operational should be known before dispatching assistance.</p> <p>Points of Entry: Establish knowledge of the exact destination and how to get there. Ensure arrangements with transit nations have been made as required. The RDC is set up by the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team or the first arriving international team.</p> <p>Dissemination: If the EADRCC is used by the requesting nation as main clearing house, keep the EADRCC informed of any relevant developments.</p> <p>Finance: If the provided assistance cannot be donated to the requesting nation, the assisting nation should be clear about this from the outset.</p>

⁶ See EADRCC Urgent Disaster Assistance Request

Checklist for the Requesting Nation	Considerations for the Assisting Nation
<p>3. In the case of a request for military assistance, or in the event where the type of assistance offered by the assisting nation will be delivered by the military, the requesting nation should specify and then agree upon with the assisting nations, the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms and conditions of the deployment, • Duration of the deployment, • Whether the military may be armed or not, • The use of their national uniforms, • Mechanisms for cooperation with the civil actors in the requesting nation; 	<p>The specific consent of the receiving nation should be sought before providing assistance through military channels.</p> <p>Are appropriate safeguards in place to avoid any confusion of identities between military and/or security-focused responses and humanitarian organisations?</p>

The Reception

Checklist for the Requesting Nation	Checklist for the Assisting Nation
<p>1. Entry: Are the necessary conditions in place to allow the requested goods and equipment, as well as relief personnel/ international teams into the country?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Border Police/Immigration:</u> Awareness of the special status of incoming disaster relief personnel; Shortcutting visa procedures; Visa and work permit waivers when necessary for entire period relief is being provided; • <u>Airport Authorities:</u> Mechanisms in place to ensure rapid grant of landing and overflight permission for relief flights? • <u>Customs:</u> Awareness of the special status of incoming disaster relief goods, equipment, medical products, animals (i.e. search dogs), hazardous materials, and their means of transport; • <u>Road Authorities/Police:</u> Awareness of the special status of the incoming assistance goods, equipment and personnel: Waiver of taxation (i.e. road tax, toll); Provision of escort, security, clearing of the roads. 	<p>Entry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on any bilateral/regional agreements with the stricken and transit nations and or the status of the MoU of Vital Cross Border Transport; • <u>Border:</u> Provide requesting nation with all necessary information to ensure rapid visa processing; It is advisable to have proof of tasking to identify personnel; • <u>Customs:</u> Ensure correct labelling of provided goods/equipment and transparency of their origin; Ensure correct declaration of any communication equipment; Ensure there is an accurate inventory of equipment going to the stricken nation; • <u>Road Authorities/Police:</u> Ensure that the vehicles used in the international disaster relief assistance are recognised as part of the relief effort, in coordination with the national authorities of the requesting nation.
<p>2. Communication: Are the necessary conditions for telecommunication in place? Can the international teams receive the necessary access to frequencies, bandwidth and satellite use?</p>	<p>Communication: Are the necessary procedures in place to coordinate any press and media policy or related actions with the national authorities of the requesting nation?</p>
<p>3. Command and Control: Has the LEMA and OSOCC command and control structure been established? Have liaison officers been appointed to cooperate with the incoming international teams?</p>	<p>Command and Control: Has a Point of Contact with the national authorities been established? Has a LEMA and OSOCC command and control structure been established? Will a liaison officer be nominated to facilitate communication with local authorities?</p>
<p>4. Coordination: Are other relevant Ministries involved in the reception procedures? Telecommunication-, Transport-, Health- and Police-Services are among the most important to involve.</p>	<p>Coordination: Are coordination structures in place with the UN, Red Cross Actors (including the National Society in the stricken nation) NGOs and community organisations and services.</p>
<p>5. Security: Can the security of the international teams be guaranteed? Are the appropriate means in place to keep personnel, locations, goods and equipment related to the international assistance, safe?</p>	<p>Security: Is the requesting nation able to ensure the security of the personnel, locations, goods and equipment of the international disaster relief operation? If not, are the necessary provisions in place to ensure safety? Is there an agreed position on liability of relief personnel?</p>
<p>6. Operations Area: Is a base camp required for the relief personnel? If so, are there adequate provisions for accommodation, food, water, hygiene</p>	<p>Operations Area: Are assisting relief personnel aware of the nature of the task force area: what is provided for them and what still needs to be</p>

Checklist for the Requesting Nation	Checklist for the Assisting Nation
facilities, storage, electricity and communication technology, transport etc ⁷ ; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do assisting teams have the authorisation to hire local staff and use local services; • Has the impact of international assistance on local resources and infrastructure been considered, for example increased traffic on roads, electricity demand etc? • Is access provided for approved humanitarian organizations to reach stricken communities? 	procured; Is it possible to hire staff locally and make use of other local services whilst in the stricken nation and in an assisting capacity?
7. Extended Hours: Can the working hours of state-operated offices and services, essential to the timely and proper delivery and conduct of the international assistance, be extended to outside of normal office hours?	
8. Language: Have possible language barriers been taken into consideration? Have the assisting nations been informed about the languages that can be used?	Language: Have possible language barriers been taken into consideration?

⁷ See INSARAG Guidelines and Methodology. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. May 2007

Disaster assistance request

To: EADRCC
Fax: +32-2-707.2677 Number of Pages []
E-mail: eadrcc@hq.nato.int
Date/Time (DTG) [Date and Time of the Message in GMT]
Subject Request for Assistance to: [Name of stricken EAPC Country]
From Name : [Name of the Point of Contact]
Organization: [Organization Point of Contact]
Phone: [Phone number Point of Contact]
Fax: [Fax number Point of Contact]
Operating Hours: [Operating Hours of the Point of Contact]

1. [Type of the Disaster]
[Date and time the Disaster occurred in GMT]
[Location of the Disaster (also provide coordinates in Longitude and Latitude)]
[Size of the area affected]
[Estimated number of persons affected]
[Others affected (structures, crops, animals, etc.)]
2. [Initial assessment of the damage and description of the situation]
3. [prognosis for the coming 24, 48 and 72 hours]
4. [Indicate own resources available for disaster response]
5. Assistance required in order listed (1 being highest priority)
 - 5.1 [Description] [Effective date] [Quantity]
 - 5.2. [Description] [Effective date] [Quantity]
 - 5.3 [Description] [Effective date] [Quantity]
 - 5.4 [Description] [Effective date] [Quantity]Etc.
6. [Point of Entry]
7. [Point of Delivery]
8. Services of experts (indicate speciality and for how long)
 - 8.1 [Type of speciality] [For how long]
 - 8.2 [Type of speciality] [For how long]
 - 8.3 [Type of speciality] [For how long]
 - 8.4 [Type of speciality] [For how long]Etc.
9. [Any other relevant information that will assist in expediting the request]
10. Operational Point of Contact in the affected area
Name : [Name of the Operational Point of Contact]
Organization: [Organization Operational Point of Contact]
Phone: [Phone number Operational Point of Contact]
Fax: [Fax number Operational Point of Contact]
E-mail: [E-mail address of the Operational Point of Contact]
Operating Hours: [Operating Hours of the Operational Point of Contact]

Definitions and Features of International Disaster Response

Consequence Management:

Reactive measures used to mitigate the destructive effects of attacks, incidents and natural disasters.

Disaster:

A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources⁸.

International Assistance (International Disaster Relief Assistance):

In the context of this checklist and in accordance with the Oslo Guidelines and Memorandum of Understanding, international assistance refers to material, personnel and services/expertise to cope with the consequences of a disaster sent from or through the territory of a state, to a stricken nation in order to assist in the national disaster response.

International Organisations:

Both, governmental and non-governmental, Red Cross/Red Crescent, multi-national and/or regional organisations.

LEMA:

The Local Emergency Management Authority, a generic name used in UN disaster relief terminology to describe a designated emergency operation agency, in the civil authorities of the stricken nation. The LEMA is the ultimate responsible authority for the overall command, coordination and management of the response operation. LEMA can refer to national, regional and local authorities, or combinations thereof, which are collectively responsible for the disaster relief operation. As agreed in the EAPC Policy on 'Enhanced Practical Cooperation in the Field of International Disaster Relief'⁹ national teams will remain under national control while deployed to the stricken nation, but the operational direction of the team will be with the LEMA.

National Point of Contact:

The National Point of Contact is designated/ established in both the stricken and assisting nation by the responsible national authority to send and to receive requests for international assistance, to exchange information and to liaise between the LEMA and the international community, assisting nations/international organisations.

On-Site Command Post:

A command post deployed by the LEMA, to direct, command, coordinate and manage the relief operation on the site of the disaster.

OSOCC:

The On Site Operations Coordination Centre can be deployed by UN OCHA in case of a major disaster. The main purpose of the OSOCC is to assist local government authorities, i.e. the LEMA, in coordinating international assistance.

⁸ UN ISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction (2009)

⁹ EAPC(C)D(98)10(revised)

Reception and Departure Centre:

The RDC is an extension of the OSOCC and is established at point of entry into a stricken nation. The primary responsibility is the facilitation of arrivals and departures of international relief personnel.

Relief Personnel:

'Relief Personnel' constitutes those individuals, groups of civilian individuals, teams and constituted units executing disaster response activities.

Requests for Assistance:

An official application for assistance in any agreed written form of communication issued by the responsible authority of the stricken nation and addressed internationally.

UNDAC:

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system is designed to assist the UN in meeting international needs for early and qualified information during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency and in the coordination of incoming international relief at national level and/or at the site of the emergency. It is designed to deploy staff and experts at very short notice (12-24 hours) anywhere in the world.