



The devastating earthquakes that struck Türkiye and Syria in February 2023 serve as a stark reminder of the need to strengthen local disaster response capabilities, and promote the adoption of INSARAG's methodology. These earthquakes, which claimed the lives of over 50,000 people, highlighted the need to strengthen international coordination in humanitarian efforts. In the aftermath of the earthquakes, INSARAG played a pivotal role, working in support of National and Local Government counterparts, in mobilizing a global coalition of rescuers, working tirelessly to save lives. The organization swiftly deployed 49 classified USAR teams to assist in the rescue operations, showcasing its expertise and unwavering commitment to international cooperation.

2023 presented a series of challenges and achievements for the INSARAG community, with floods in Pakistan and Libya highlighting the need for a more adaptable and responsive approach to disaster management. Recognizing the changing response environment, INSARAG established a dedicated Flood Response Working Group, in April, 2023, demonstrating its commitment to addressing emerging threats and enhancing its capabilities. Adapting to the ever-changing landscape of disasters requires strong collaboration and partnership, a core tenet of INSARAG's operations. This collaborative approach fosters trust and cooperation among first responders, communities, organizations, and governments, fostering resilience and strengthening the global response to crises. INSARAG's strength lies in its diverse network of dedicated members, who share knowledge and practices, enhancing the collective response to emergencies.

While INSARAG's efforts have been invaluable in mitigating the impact of disasters, it is crucial to acknowledge the human cost of these tragedies. We must continuously strive to strengthen disaster preparedness, enhance local capabilities, and promote global collaboration.

–MR. SEBASTIAN RHODES STAMPA, INSARAG SECRETARY AND CHIEF OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SECTION OF OCHA GENEVA



Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary and Chief of the Emergency Response Section of OCHA Geneva.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

INSARAG expresses its sincere gratitude for the significant contributions of the departing Global Chair, Ambassador Manuel Bessler, who has recently retired, and extends a warm welcome to the incoming Chair, Ambassador Dominik Stillhart. During his tenure as Global Chair since 2015, Ambassador Bessler played a pivotal role in shaping INSARAG, emphasizing the crucial importance of localization and quality assurance within the network. His leadership, particularly highlighting the significance of soft power in resolving critical political issues, has been invaluable. With his retirement from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Global Chair position is transitioning to Ambassador Dominik Stillhart.

Ambassador Stillhart, in assuming this new role, engaged with the AEME Regional network and the AAR in Qatar and in his keynote speech noted that:



INSARAG has become a global model for assistance, and I am honored to be the incoming Global Chair of such a dynamic, highly respected, professional, and disciplined network. I believe that we are continuously inspiring better collaboration in the field of USAR action, and I am sure that we will continue to do so for many more decades.

–AMBASSADOR DOMINIK STILLHART, INSARAG INCOMING GLOBAL CHAIR 2023



Former Ambassador Manuel Bessler, outgoing Global Chair 2023



Ambassador Dominik Stillhart, INSARAG Incoming Global Chair 2023.



Ms. Edem Wosornu, former Chief of Response Support Branch, during the Humanitarian and Network Partnerships Week 2023.

We also extend our sincere gratitude to Ms. Edem Wosornu for her invaluable contributions to INSARAG and for her continued support as Director of Operations and Advocacy Division (OAD) in OCHA New York. INSARAG warmly welcomes Ms. Sarah Muscroft, as the new Response Support Branch (RSB) Chief, and looks forward to her leadership in affirming OCHA's unyielding support to INSARAG.



Ms. Sarah Muscroft during the closing ceremony of UK ISAR (GBR-01) and ERICAM (ESP-01) External Reclassification Exercise (IER) with Team Leaders in Geneva, Switzerland

As the Chief of the Response Support Branch in OCHA, we are proud to host the INSARAG Secretariat. Over the last three decades, the INSARAG network has constantly strived to enhance the globally recognized quality standards of International Search and Rescue to save lives in crisis situations.

–MS. SARAH MUSCROFT DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF UK ISAR (GBR-01) AND ERICAM (ESP-01) EXTERNAL RECLASSIFICATION EXERCISE (IER) WITH TEAM LEADERS IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

GLOBAL REGIONAL REPORTING

In October, INSARAG held a comprehensive global After-Action Review (AAR) of the INSARAG Earthquake Response to Türkiye and Syria, in Qatar, gathering over 185 participants from 80 countries. This thorough analysis focused on the international response to earthquakes, exploring both challenges and successful strategies and best practices to advance INSARAG's response. An evaluation report is set to be published, assessing how well the INSARAG network followed its four key

principles: quality standards, local involvement, adaptable response, and partnerships. Additionally, five Working Groups met to discuss various topics, including the newly formed National Capacity Building Working Group.

To improve the coordination and effectiveness of national and international rescue efforts, two Earthquake Response Exercises (ERE's) were carried out in Argentina, and Australia. Various technical training sessions, such as USAR

Coordination, INSARAG Coordination and Management System, and the INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification Leadership Course, were also organized to enhance the capabilities of response teams.

Looking forward to 2024, a comprehensive schedule of over 20 global events are being planned, starting from the New Year Teleconference on the 17th of January, ten IEC/Rs and the INSARAG National Accreditation Process (IRNAP) in August for Argentina and in November for Ecuador.



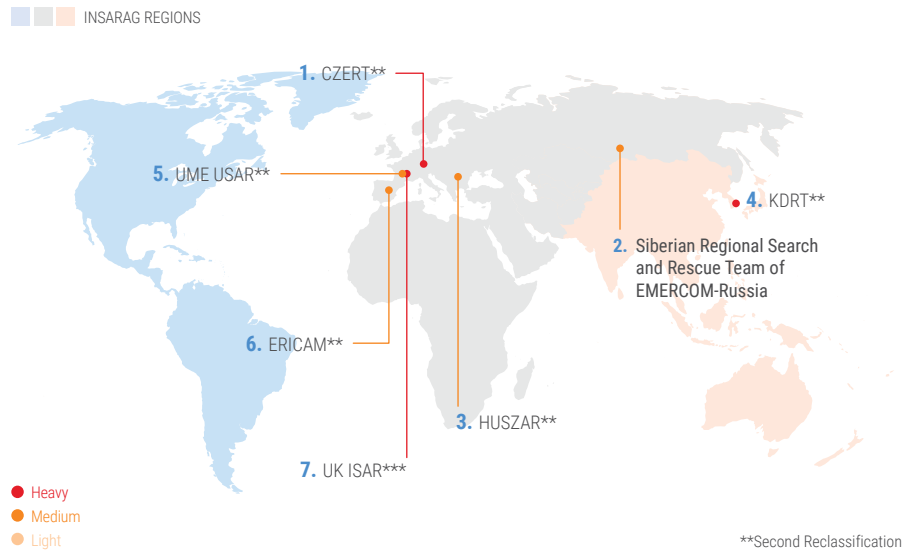
UCC USAR coordination in Hatay - photo contribution SDC

GLOBAL MILESTONES IN 2023

- **INSARAG's systems and methodologies** significantly contributed to the efficient USAR response during the February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, offering invaluable insights and strategic recommendations to enhance future collapsed structure USAR responses.
- **Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week 2023** presents a pivotal occasion for INSARAG to actively connect with its members, forge new partnerships, and foster collaborative opportunities. Following the February earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, this year's HNPW offered a platform for the INSARAG network and its collaborators to assess achievements and identify areas for advancement.
- **The Flood Response Working Group (FRWG)** was formed to explore and cultivate adaptable response operations, exemplified by INSARAG's flood-response strategy in Libya, harmonizing remote coordination for international search and rescue missions and fostering seamless collaboration with Libyan authorities for optimized on-site management.
- **The National Capacity Building Working Group (NCBWG)** was created to aid member states and regional groups in bolstering INSARAG Recognized National Accreditation Processes (IRNAP) in alignment with INSARAG Guidelines, marking a milestone in supporting national capacity building efforts, while INSARAG's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.

INSARAG EXTERNAL CLASSIFICATION/RECLASSIFICATIONS IN 2023, WE CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING TEAMS

1. Urban Search and Rescue Team of the Czech Republic - CZERT - CZE-01 - Heavy
2. Siberian Regional Search and Rescue Team of EMERCOM of Russia - RUS-02 - Medium
3. Hungarian National Integrated Organisation for Rescue Services - HUSZAR - HUN-02 - Medium
4. Korea Disaster Relief Team – KDRT - KOR-01 - Heavy
5. Unidad Militar de Emergencias USAR - UME USAR - ESP-02 - Medium
6. Emergencia Respuesta Inmediata Comunidad de Madrid - ERICAM - ESP-01 - Medium
7. United Kingdom Fire & Rescue Services International Search and Rescue Team - UK ISAR - GBR-01 - Heavy



2023 TIMELINE OF INSARAG EVENTS

- **JANUARY**
INSARAG New Year Teleconference, Switzerland
- **FEBRUARY**
Working Groups Meeting (back to back with TL Meeting), Singapore
Team Leaders Meeting, Singapore
- **APRIL**
Regional TSG/TRG IRNAP Course, Ecuador
HNPW 2023 (Face-to-face week at the CIGG), Switzerland
ISG Meeting, Switzerland
- **MAY**
ICMS Course, Qatar
USAR Coordination (UC) Course, Russia
ICMS Course, Korea
- **JUNE**
IEC/R Leadership Training Course, Netherlands
Czech Republic-Heavy IER, Czech Republic
- **AUGUST**
IRNAP Argentina, Argentina
Guideline Review Group Meeting, Australia
AP ERE /1st GRG meeting, Australia
Americas IERE, Argentina
- **SEPTEMBER**
Russia-2 EMERCOM Siberia, Russia
AP Regional meeting, New Zealand
- **OCTOBER**
HUSZAR Hungary Medium IER (MODEX), Bulgaria
South Korea-Heavy IER, Korea
Working Groups Meeting, Qatar
Global AAR Meeting, Qatar
AEME Regional Meeting, Qatar
Americas Regional Meeting, America
- **NOVEMBER**
USAR capacity Assessment Scoping-Tanzania, Tanzania
IRNAP Ecuador, Ecuador
USAR Coordination (UC) Course, Türkiye
Spain UME - Medium IER, Spain
RDC/UCC Course Switzerland, Switzerland
UK ISAR - Heavy IER, Switzerland
Spain ERICAM- Medium IER, Switzerland
- **DECEMBER**
IRNAP Re-certification Guatemala, Guatemala

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

Americas

Argentina IERE: The International ERE in Argentina 2023, organized by Argentina and OCHA, brought together 500 participants and 40 EXCON members for five days in San Juan province, engaging in earthquake simulation and evaluation activities across five coordinated functional areas involving national, provincial, and municipal sectors, international response teams, health responders, UNDAC, Swiss GIAR, and humanitarian partners' coordination entities.



III Regional Humanitarian Response and Assistance Drill: The III Regional Humanitarian Response and Assistance Drill in Central America, led by CEPREDENAC with international organization support, convened over 2,000 participants from multiple countries, engaging in coordinated efforts across diverse sectors such as USAR, UNDAC, health, and private entities, facilitated by INSARAG, UNDAC deployment, Panama UN technical team involvement, and CBI expert collaboration to execute a comprehensive, multi-dimensional exercise.



Africa, Europe and Middle East

UK ISAR Scoping Mission to Kenya: The scoping mission aimed to assess and identify gaps in the USAR capabilities of Kenyan teams (Disaster Response Battalion and National Disaster Management Unit), noting improvements since 2014 but highlighting remaining action points for INSARAG classification, emphasizing the need for equipment, training, and a potential 4-year classification journey.



AAR Qatar: The INSARAG After Action Review (AAR) meeting held in Qatar from 17-18 October brought together 185 participants from 80 countries and organizations, reflecting the global nature of the response effort. The meeting provided a platform to assess the response, share lessons learned, and strengthen international cooperation, underscoring the importance of preparedness and collective action in the face of an earthquake.

Libya response: credits Jordan USAR Team: In the bilateral response of INSARAG teams to the emergency in Derna, the INSARAG methodologies played a crucial role in facilitating communication and coordination among search and rescue teams (SAR) and emergency medical teams (EMT) by using the INSARAG Coordination Management System (ICMS) with remote support from the INSARAG Information Management Working Group.




Asia-Pacific

INSARAG Asia Pacific Earthquake Response Exercise 2023: The Australian government organized the exercise in Brisbane, involving 330 participants from national and international emergency response organizations to simulate the acceptance of international assistance and coordinate response efforts for a realistic earthquake scenario.



INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting 2023: The INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting 2023 convened in Christchurch, New Zealand, engaging 65 participants from 17 countries to welcome new Pacific members, exchange insights on disaster management strategies, reflect on recent earthquake responses, and establish regional priorities for the ISG's implementation and partnerships, concluding with the transition of regional chairmanship from South Korea to Pakistan.

PEEK INTO 2024

 **36**
EVENTS PLANNED

 **22**
COUNTRIES

 **8**
TRAININGS

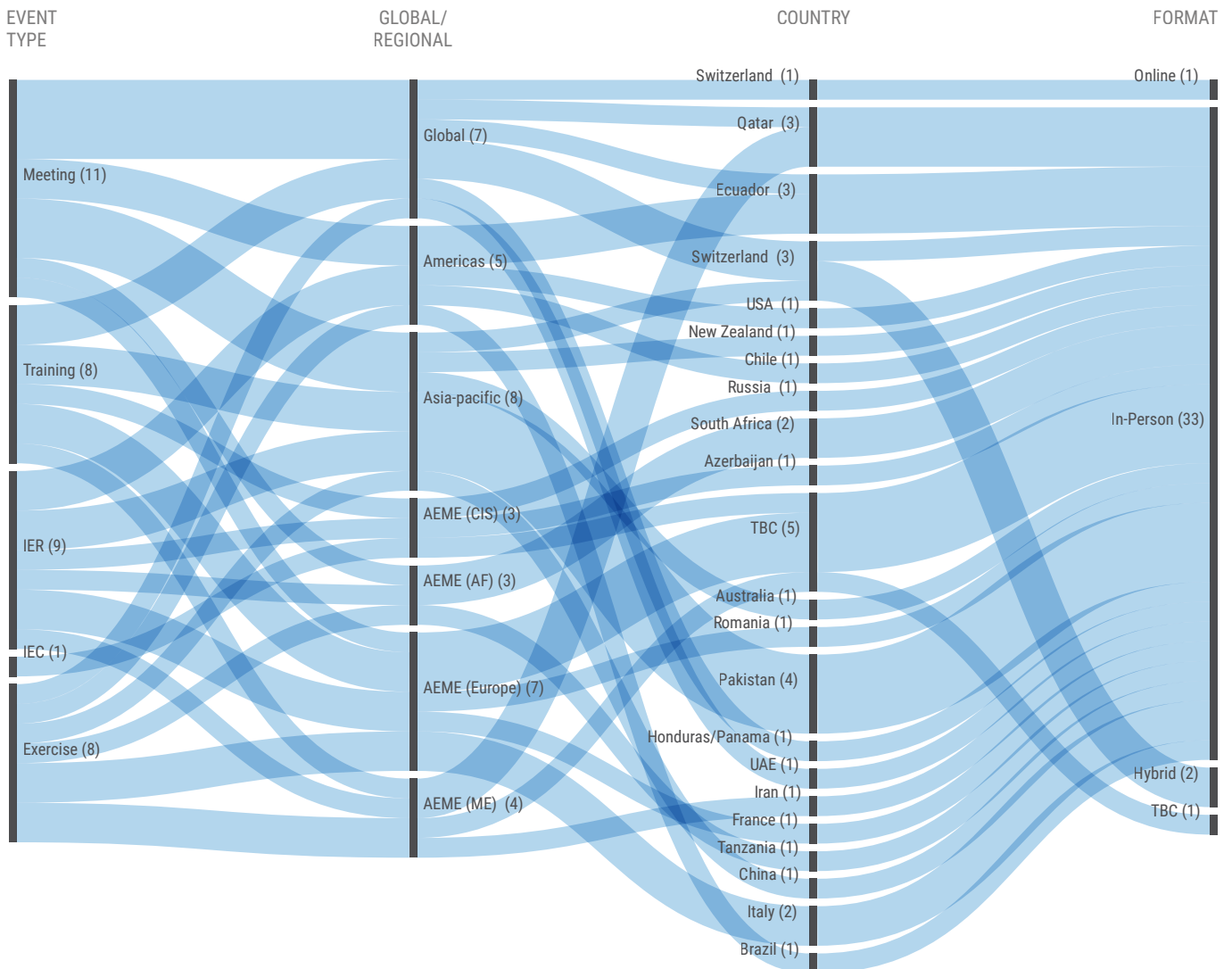
 **8**
EXERCISES

 **10**
IEC/IER

 **33**
IN PERSON

 **2**
HYBRID

 **1**
REMOTE



A WORD OF THANKS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

The INSARAG global network expresses profound gratitude to our donors and supporters, whose invaluable contributions drive our vital mission. Your support sustains our efforts to enhance emergency preparedness and response, ultimately saving lives, alleviating suffering, and mitigating adverse consequences. As we embark on a promising year ahead, filled with numerous activities, trainings, and exercises, we are committed to fortifying our network to ensure the seamless effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance.

Drafted by the INSARAG Secretariat, OCHA Geneva, with the guidance from Global and Regional Chairs, and Network partners.