

International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)

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What is it?

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) is a network of disaster-prone and disaster-responding countries and organizations dedicated to urban search and rescue (USAR) and operational field coordination.

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)

- It was **established in 1991** following initiatives of international SAR teams that responded to the **1988 Armenia earthquake**.
- The **United Nations** was chosen as the **INSARAG secretariat to facilitate international participation and coordination**.
- The Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS), located within OCHA Geneva's Emergency Services Branch (ESB), functions as the INSARAG secretariat.

Activities of INSARAG

- INSARAG activities are **guided by United Nations General Assembly resolution 57/150** of 16 December 2002 on "Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance".
- Activities are **also led by the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration adopted at the first INSARAG Global Meeting in 2010 in Kobe, Japan**.

INSARAG mandate includes:

- Field Coordination Support

- Render **emergency preparedness and response activities** more effective and thereby save more lives, reduce suffering and minimize adverse consequences.
- **Improve efficiency in cooperation among international USAR teams** working in collapsed structures at a disaster site.
- **Promote activities designed to improve search-and-rescue preparedness in disaster-prone countries**, thereby prioritizing developing countries.
- Develop internationally accepted procedures and systems for sustained cooperation between national USAR teams operating on the international scene.
- Develop USAR procedures, guidelines and best practices, and strengthen cooperation between interested organizations during the emergency relief phase.

INSARAG External Classifications

- INSARAG has developed a voluntary, independent peer-review process of international USAR teams – the INSARAG External Classification (IEC).
- The INSARAG Steering Group endorsed the IEC in 2005.
- According to their operational capabilities, **USAR teams deploying internationally are classified as “Medium Teams” or “Heavy Teams” through the IEC process.**