VIRTUAL OSOCC FOR USAR TEAMS

Virtual OSOCC is a real-time online coordination tool for disaster response professionals from USAR teams, national authorities, as well as regional and international organizations at a global level. The activation of Virtual OSOCC in case of an earthquake is usually triggered by a red GDACS alert.

What does the Virtual OSOCC offer to USAR teams?

1. Immediately after an earthquake, the demand for information is great, but its supply is often unpredictable and patchy. Virtual OSOCC pulls together information from OCHA, national authorities and other organizations for a better **situational awareness**: the scale and scope of the disaster, if the affected country has requested or accepted international assistance, as well as the immediate response priorities.

2. For international USAR teams which are about to deploy to the affected areas, the Virtual OSOCC provides a one-stop-shop for information about the **operational environment** in the field: basic country information, operational priorities, the rules and regulations for equipment entry and visas, security situation, logistical constraints, available and working communications systems, the location and contacts of the OSOCC, RDC and other relief teams, etc.

3. During operations in the field, USAR teams use the Virtual OSOCC for **information exchange and coordination**. USAR teams have access to information and announcements from the UNDAC team, the OSOCC or LEMA, but they also have a space for discussion and sharing of situation reports.

What are USAR teams expected to post, when and where?

1. As per the INSARAG Guidelines, all international USAR teams need to **register** prior to their deployment, indicating their status in the response (monitoring, stand-by, mobilizing, deployed or stand-down). This information will be used by the OSOCC and national authorities to prepare for and coordinate the response. If the USAR team is ready to deploy (i.e. changing its status to mobilising) it needs to fill out the fact sheet, providing contact details, capacity and arrival times. USAR teams need to change their team status when the situation requires doing so. [*Illustration: 1*]

2. USAR teams are expected to **keep abreast of the latest information** from the ground and of any instructions from LEMA or OCHA provided on the Virtual OSOCC. In case of questions or a need for clarifications, teams should post a question in the comments section of the relevant discussion title. [*Illustration: 2*]

3. If the USAR team is the first to arrive in the affected areas and establishes a provisional **OSOCC and/or RDC**, it needs to provide location, contact details and any other relevant information as a comment in the 'Response coordination' title. Discussion moderators will move information to the relevant subtitles. [*Illustration: 3*]

4. During the operations phase, information about the **field coordination** (discussion between USAR teams, exchange of situation reports and information sharing) should be exchanged under the *USAR coordination* subtitle. If the operational are is divided into sectors by the OSOCC, discussion moderators will create relevant subtitles, eg. *USAR Sector 1*, *USAR Sector 2*. All information should be posted as comment under the appropriate subtitle. [*Illustration: 4*]

COMMENT RESPONSIBLY

The amount of information entered on the Virtual OSOCC during large-scale emergencies can quickly become overwhelming. Before posting a comment, always consider carefully of the information is necessary. For example, after the team status has been updated in the team fact sheet, there is no need to provide the same information as a comment. Comments and/or files should be posted under the appropriate subtitle. Alternatively, generic situation updates about the disaster should be posted under subtitle "Situation overview". This will help other users to find relevant information more efficiently.

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Selected discussion: Example Disaster

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[RELIEF TEAMS] [RELIEF ITEMS] [HIT/FEAT] [MAPS] [VIEW] [SUBSCRIBE]

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Alerted Rosters

Situation
- Situation overview
- Request fro international assistance
- Comments

2

Situation

...overview - Gintare Eidimtaite, OCHA **7 min ago**

...ppines Flash Update No. 1: Typhoon Rammasun (Glenda)

...Tropical Storm Rammasun (known locally as Glenda) intensified into a typhoon as it ... the Philippine Sea. As of 4 p.m. (local time - NY 4 a.m.), the centre of Typhoon Rammasun was located about 60 kilometres east of Legazpi City, Albay provi... ...num sustained winds of 130 kilometres per hour (km/h) and gusts of up to 160 km/h according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA). Typhoon Rammasun is projected to make landfall over Albay in the evening, reach Metro Manila before 12 p.m. on 16 July and move across Bataan province before leaving the Philippine Area of Responsibility on 17 July afternoon. The path of the typhoon slightly shifted south from its initial projected track over the last 24 hours and is moving across highly populated areas.

Flooding, flash flood and landslides are expected in the affected areas. According to PAGASA, Rammasun could generate storm surges of up to three metres in coastal areas. An estimated 43 million people may be affected including 11.5 million people in Metro Manila according to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development-Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center. Among the estimated affected people, about 136,000 households (68,000 households are below the poverty line) are considered to be highly susceptible to landslides and storm surges as identified by PAGASA.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) has issued regular advisories and alerted local authorities and residents along southern and central Luzon and northern Visayas, particularly coastal areas to implement preparedness measures. School classes have been suspended in seven regions (III, IV-A, IV-B, V, VII, National Capital Region and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao). As early as 13 July, the NDRRMC convened a pre-disaster risk assessment meeting to prepare for the typhoon and relief supplies and personnel have been pre-positioned for emergency response. About 31,600 households were preemptively evacuated in Regions V and VIII.

The Humanitarian Country Team is monitoring the effects of the typhoon in collaboration with the Office of Civil Defense. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are also on alert with non-food items and hygiene kits for 20,000 families and 10,000 tarpaulins mobilized.

...p international assistance - Gintare Eidimtaite, OCHA **7 min ago**

...ent of the Philippines has announced it is accepting international assistance. Please find the official communique attached.

add comment

Operational environment
- Country baseline data
- Operational priorities
- Customs and immigration
- Security situation
- Access
- Communications
- Comments

Response coordination
- Coordination setup
- Reception/Departure Centre (RDC)
- LEMA updates
- Assessments and reports
- Comments

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New comments since last update

VO User (OCHA) 1 min ago edit comment

Attached is the first report from LEMA, indicating the seriousness of the situation. The areas most affected are in the east of the country. National disaster management authority has deployed its rapid response teams, national military is providing food and water assistance.

📄 UNDAC Handbook.pdf

OSOCC
- Situation
- Announcements
- Assessments
- USAR coordination Sector A
- USAR Coordination Sector B
- Comments

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What if I want to learn more?

You can find a full Virtual OSOCC Handbook on our homepage (http://vosocc.unocha.org). There are many other ways in which the USAR teams can follow new developments and provide feedback:

- Subscribe to the Virtual OSOCC YouTube channel;
- Follow @VirtualOSOCC and @GDACS on Twitter;
- Attend events related to GDACS, INSARAG, UNDAC and the OSOCC concept where Virtual OSOCC is always presented;
- Contact the Virtual OSOCC team at OCHA if your organization would like a tailored training session on the platform through Webex. Subject to availability of funds, the team can also offer in-person training.

Should you have any questions or would like to request a training, do not hesitate to contact us at virtual-osocc@un.org. Our focal point for the Americas is Lorena Abalos (abalos@un.org).

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