



TO: OCHA-GENEVA  
 FROM: JOANA MERLIN-SCHOLTES  
 UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN THAILAND  
 SUBJECT: **DISASTER, UNDAC/UNRC FIELD SITREP 4**  
 DATE: 30 December 2004

**I. Situation**

As of 16.30pm local time, Government of Thailand (GoT) official estimates stood at 1,687 dead, 8,951 injured and 4,265 reported missing. The tables below list the GoT breakdown of Thai, foreigners and those registered as missing.

**DEAD**

Thai	Foreign	Unidentified	Total
1,296	187	204	1,687

**INJURED**

Thai	Foreign	Unidentified	Total
5,364	1,045	4,542	8,951

**MISSING**

Thai	Foreign	Unidentified	Total
1,563	519	2,163	4,265

However, the toll is still rising as new bodies continue to be recovered. Estimates of up to 6,000 dead are now being cited.

**II. In-Country Response**

The GoT Interior Minister hosted a coordination meeting attended by embassy representatives and a senior official from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) at the Phuket Crisis Centre. The Minister outlined the GoT's three-phase response strategy. Phase 1 has focused on the recovery and identification of human remains; Phase 2 will focus on preventive infectious disease control measures; and Phase 3 will focus on longer-term reconstruction. The Minister reported that the GoT is now in transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2. He emphasised that while the challenges are great, Thailand is able to cope with the problem.

MoPH reported that the public health situation is under control and no disease outbreaks have occurred. There has however been an increase in reported cases of diarrhoea, unexplained fevers and respiratory infections. The MoPH stated that at present the health system is responding effectively, with clean water being distributed, children being immunised and a disease surveillance system in place. On the whole,

however, international assistance is welcomed and a GoT press release issued today listed the following as priority needs:

- Metal caskets
- Transportation
- Medical supplies, such as high-potency antibiotics
- Rubber gloves
- Masks
- Blankets
- Tents
- Heavy equipment for reconstruction
- Generators

The press release did not specify the quantities needed or the areas where these items can best be directed. While systems for tagging and photographing dead bodies are in place, MoPH acknowledged that the management of dead bodies was still problematic. DNA testing is being used to confirm the identity of bodies after initial identification by family members. The UNRC visited Phuket Hospital and reported that the hospital appeared well-equipped, with 50 refrigerated containers that can hold 50 coffins each.

The UNDAC Team Leader took the opportunity to address the meeting to explain the role and purpose of the UNDAC mission.

Team members subsequently met and briefed the Interior Minister and provincial Governor on the UNDAC mission. The Minister expressed his full support for the mission and appointed the Inspector General of Ministry for Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) as the team's focal GoT contact. MSDHS is the GoT agency responsible for disaster rehabilitation and recovery and therefore an appropriate counterpart for UNDAC/UNRC. The Inspector General is also very supportive of the UNDAC mission and immediately organised office space for the team within his office. He has delayed his planned return to Bangkok by an extra day to spend tomorrow with the team.

### **III. International Response**

The team has established an office base alongside the Inspector General of MSDHS, however an internet connection was not able to be established until this evening.

Ten medical kits (to support 100 people each) arrived from Norway this afternoon.

UNICEF is now deploying local staff to the provinces.

### **IV. Assistance**

Several needs assessments are currently being conducted/proposed and the team is trying to make contact with all assessment groups. The Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) has conducted an assessment in Phuket and Phang-Nga provinces and will forward their report to the UN team. The ADPC report indicates that most of the initial needs have been met in Phuket, with water, clothes and food widely available

in the province. However, in Phang-Nga water and sanitation systems are affected and more assessment is needed. The IFRC will commence an assessment tomorrow in Phang-Nga, focused particularly on water and sanitation. Initial information points to considerable loss of life and to enormous damage to infrastructure and livelihoods in all 6 provinces, especially to fisheries communities.

WorldVision has conducted assessments in Ranong and in Phang-Nga.

During the next 2 days, the UN team will conduct assessments in 4 provinces – Ranong, Phang-Nga, Trang and Krabi.

**V. Means of Delivery of International Assistance**

The team received reports today of congestion at Phuket airport, with MFA representatives finding the pace relentless with foreign embassy teams still arriving and the increase in donated medical supplies.

**VI. Other Information**

One additional member of the UNDAC team arrived in Phuket this evening.

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