

**COMMAND-POST TYPE EXERCISES AS A TOOL FOR THE INTERNATIONAL EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE OF URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAMS**

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**ABSTRACT** Earthquakes are one of those kinds of disasters with need for urban search and rescue activities. Especially big earthquake disasters overwhelming the local and national response capacity of the affected country require deployments of numerous international urban search and rescue teams from all around the world. This situation increases the importance of coordination at the earthquake disasters as there are usually various teams coming in to the disaster-affected country and these teams should be working in cooperation with each other under the coordination of a central body. Because of this critical importance of coordination, over the past decades, some coordination tools have been developed for the international earthquakes response of urban search and rescue teams. These coordination tools should be known by all international teams intending to deploy overseas. Teams are expected to practice these coordination tools as a part of their operation preparedness during the non-disaster times. One of the best methods to practice the coordination concept is command-post type exercise. These exercises aim to train all actors involved in the field-level earthquake response mechanism including the management component of the international urban search and rescue team, the local emergency management authority of the disaster-affected country, liaison officers, humanitarian relief agencies and other related actors. The exercise simulates international emergency call from the disaster-affected country, mobilization, operations and demobilization phases. This study explains the aim, objectives and methodology of these exercises and gives an outline. It discusses the importance of the command-post type exercise for international urban search and rescue teams.