

# THE COLUMN

THE AHA CENTRE NEWS BULETIN

VOL 13

One ASEAN One Response

THE AHA CENTRE NEWS BULETIN 2016



NEWS HIGHLIGHT

## First Anniversary of The Column



NEWS STORY

AHA Centre Emergency Response Organisation Exercise  
Annual Disaster Report

INSIGHT

Steps for Continuous Improvement in  
Emergency Operations at AHA Centre



**AHA CENTRE**

ASEAN Coordinating Centre  
for Humanitarian Assistance  
on disaster management

VOLUME 13

**2016**

Last year in February, our Communications Team was anxiously hectic on publishing the very first edition of The Column. There was lengthy discussion and debate over heaps of coffee, to decide which headline we were going to pick, which layout should we go with, but there was also tremendous sense of fulfilment when we finally published The Column for the very first time.

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow ASEANers, this year in February, The Column commemorates its first anniversary. It was initiated as part of the AHA Centre's commitment to share ideas, inspiration, knowledge and experience to the wider public in the ASEAN region.

On this edition, we met with Mr. Said Faisal, Executive Director of the AHA Centre, to share the story of how and why the newsletter was first conceived, the challenges it faced, and how it would grow in the coming years through our news highlight of the month.

We also spoke to Mr. Andy Musaffa, AHA Centre's Disaster Monitoring and Analysis Officer, who joined the organisation at its earlier stage, to talk about his journey in becoming a member of the AHA Centre family.

The year ahead appears promising with the first month of the year proven to be a productive one for the AHA Centre. The organisation continues to conduct the AHA Centre Emergency Response Organisation Exercise as told in our news story.

Lastly, in taking a final look back at 2015, we also share the 2015 Annual Disaster Report in this month's special column.

If you wish to share some stories / articles / blogs / comments with us to improve the bulletin, please drop us a message at comm@ahacentre.org, and we will do the rest.

Sincerely,  
The Column Editor

First Anniversary of The Column



Launching of The Column in February 2015: H.E. Le Luong Minh (left), Secretary General of ASEAN, with Mr. Said Faisal (right), Executive Director of the AHA Centre

As we enter a new year, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) celebrates the first anniversary of our monthly newsletter - The Column. The newsletter was first published in February of 2015 with a cover story on AHA Centre's emergency response to flooding in Malaysia.

The Column was first initiated as part of the Communications Cluster's product, in an effort to engage with the AHA Centre's stakeholders. It serves as one of the medium for the AHA Centre to communicate its key message of One ASEAN One Response, packaged through various activities held by the AHA Centre. "Without a communication product such as The Column, there is a missing link. We miss an opportunity to communicate our activities, share knowledge and share experiences," said Mr. Said Faisal, Executive Director of the AHA Centre.

Recounting on how The Column was first initiated, Mr. Said Faisal recalled how the team brainstormed on the variety of news and activities that the organisation wanted to share to the wider audience, but there was an effort to go beyond news reporting, "We wanted to capture knowledge and thoughts," said Mr. Said Faisal. This is reflected in The Column's variety of sections including 'The Other Side', a section dedicated to interviewing professional actors in disaster management in an up-close and personal manner, sharing their experiences, challenges, and aspirations among many. 'The Insights' section is a part of The Column, acting as the know-how section, where experts and key influencers in disaster management share their knowledge and experience with the readers.

The journey that The Column embarked over the past one year has not been without challenges. The team is faced with the challenge of keeping it valuable, designing the most enticing design and layouts, ensuring that they are published on time, and keeping the information shared interesting. However, the feedback received from AHA Centre's stakeholders has been positive, noting on how informative and useful the newsletter has been in projecting a variety of activities surrounding disaster management in the ASEAN region. This is an important point that Mr. Said Faisal noted, "We can see the evolution of The Column since it was first initiated. It used to mainly focus on AHA Centre's activities, but now it has begun to look at the overall disaster management activities around the region. It looks at events hosted by ASEAN and even other significant global issues."

Sharing on his hopes for The Column in the coming years, Mr. Said Faisal said, "Today everything is digital. Perhaps one day we might even have mobile phone applications specifically for The Column."

The AHA Centre hopes that The Column will continue to grow and evolve over the years, rearranging the news and the sections delivered as well as combining an element of creativity and innovation based on feedback and the needs of the audience, be it more activity coverage, analysis, or knowledge sharing. One thing for certain is that The Column serves not only as a medium for news reporting, but also a database of knowledge, one that provides fresh information to readers on a monthly basis.

How The Column is developed



Brainstorm session

The session is to generate ideas through intensive discussion within AHA Centre's communication team to determine the content that will be published for the upcoming edition.



Content development

This phase involves three major activities namely; data collection by obtaining materials from relevant information sources, interview with chosen spokespersons for sections such as The Other Side and Insights, and finally, event coverage.



Content review, revision and approval

This involves the process of reviewing the draft of the content materials, revising them based on the feedback, and having the approved to be processed for the design phase.



Design development

Contents will be passed on to the creative team to develop the design and layout for the month.



Design review, revision and approval

The resulting design will be reviewed, revised and approved for its final product.



Digital version upload

As The Column is delivered both in printed as well as digital version, the latter is usually uploaded for reading by online users in tandem with the printing, packaging and distribution efforts.



Printing, packaging and distribution of printed version

The final artwork will be passed on to the printing vendors for processing, and the team will then package the printed versions for distribution to AHA Centre's stakeholders around the ASEAN region.

AHA Centre Emergency Response Organisation Exercise

As part of the AHA Centre's commitment to facilitate the cooperation and coordination amongst ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response, the AHA Centre conducts a regular exercise on a monthly basis with the aim to sustain the AHA Centre's preparedness to respond to an emergency at any given moment. The exercise also has an objective of ensuring that all staff is familiar with the AHA Centre emergency response organisation guidelines that consists of planning process, communication mechanism, standard operating procedures and emergency operations structure.

During the exercise, relevant staff members of the AHA Centres perform functions according to the guideline. Main functions within the emergency response organisation comprised of Logistics, Operations, Planning, and Administration & Finance. This month in particular, the exercise which was conducted on 22 January 2016, focused on the utilisation of ASEAN WebEOC as well as the response planning process of responding to a scenario involving an 8.0 magnitude earthquake.

Speaking on the exercise Mr. Yos Malole, AHA Centre's Preparedness and Response Officer commented, "It was a great exercise especially for the new members of our AHA Centre family. They find the exercise useful as it helps familiarise them on the procedures of responding to an emergency situation."



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The year 2015 saw a marked decrease in the number of disasters that occurred in the region. The number of incidents in 2013 and 2014 were 322 and 290 respectively, declining to 114 in 2015. Corollary to this decrease is the decrease in the number of affected people. From 39,820,535 and 17,883,714 in 2013 and 2014, respectively, to 6,742,050 in 2015. Despite the considerable decrease of incidents over the past three years, January still continues to generally be the month when most disasters occur in the region since 2013. Flooding too, remains to be the most disaster causing natural hazard. In 2015, 65% of disaster incidents are accounted for by flooding events.

This decrease in disaster incidents is coincident with the occurrence of one of the top three strongest El Niño events ever recorded in history. It should be noted that scientists have already shown that the number of climate-related disasters like floods, storms, droughts and others that occur either in an El Niño, neutral or La Niña years are statistically not different from one another (Goddard and Dilley 2005). Nonetheless, El Niño and La Niña are important as their occurrence make hydrometeorologically induced disasters more predictable urging decision makers to take the necessary precautions. Moreover, an El Niño or La Niña may last until to more than a year, affecting rainfall and temperature patterns for far longer, leading to accruing societal impacts.

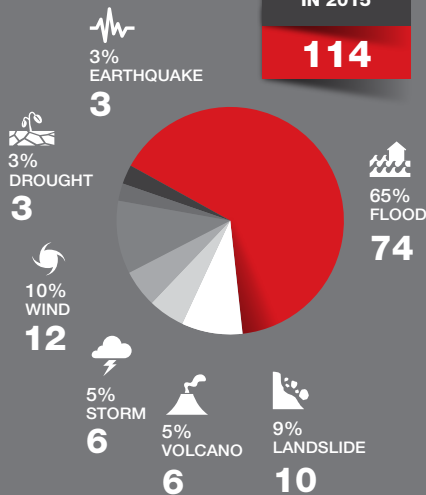
### References:

<http://iri.columbia.edu/our-expertise/climate/enso/why-do-we-care-about-el-nino-and-la-nina/>

Lisa Goddard and Maxx Dilley, 2005: El niño: catastrophe or opportunity. *J. Climate*, 18, 651–665.

*The Annual Disaster Report section is a special section dedicated on covering disasters that occurred in 2015.*

## TYPE OF DISASTER IN 2015



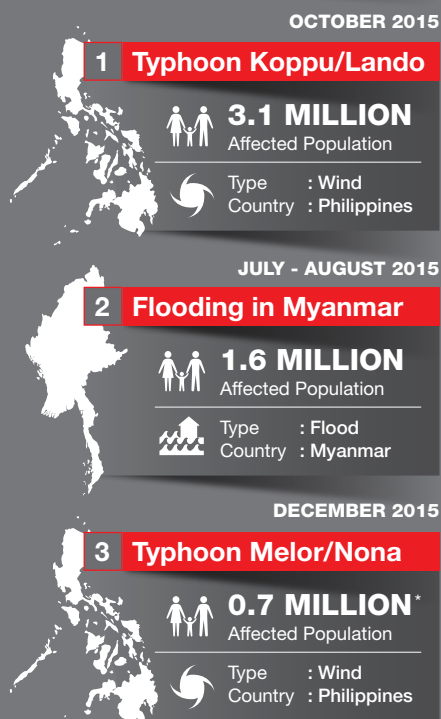
## DAMAGE & CASUALTY IN 2015



## NUMBER OF INCIDENT BY COUNTRY IN 2015



## TOP 3 MOST DESTRUCTIVE INCIDENT



## OUTLOOK FOR THE COMING YEAR

The 2015 El Niño is still strong and will peak during the first quarter of 2016. Most meteorological models show it will decline during the second quarter and dissipate thereafter. However, its effects are expected to last far longer into the coming months. Hence, it is important that this phenomenon and its accompanying consequences continue to be considered in disaster mitigation plans. Climate-related disasters like floods, storms, droughts should continue to be a special focus for the region.

## MONTHLY DISASTER OUTLOOK

**JAN 2016**



### JANUARY

### DISASTER COMPARISON NUMBER



### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Natural disaster reports are regularly recorded in the ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADInet) [www.adinet.ahacentre.org](http://www.adinet.ahacentre.org). Only significant disasters that satisfy the following criteria are recorded in ADInet:

- More than 100 people affected
- Involving more than 1 subdistricts

At least 31,000 people were affected by 17 natural disasters in this month. The number of the affected people is lower compared to last year's (143,000 people), although flood remains to be the main hazard that creates the high impact. Other types of disaster that occurred this month are winds, landslide and volcanic activity.

This month, flood occurred in several places in Indonesia causing inundation to residential areas, roads and the agriculture land. The local authority has moved the affected

community to a safer place and assist them properly inside the evacuation centres. Similar situation also occurred in Johor, Malaysia at the beginning of the month. Meanwhile in Thailand and Viet Nam, strong winds occurred in the northern part of the country damaging many houses. Moreover, volcanic activity of Mt. Egon in Indonesia also contributes to the impact figure as nearly 1,000 people had to move due to eruption risks. Despite of the significance of the disasters, the impact is relatively lower compared to last year and last month's disaster impact.

The Northeast Monsoon is expected to continue from January to March. Consequently, the dry and cool weather is expected to prevail in the northern part of the ASEAN region. In the southern part, the Northeast Monsoon may enhance rainfall activities, particularly in equatorial areas. Understanding the forecast, the risk of flood and strong wind are still present for region in the next month.

**DISCLAIMER:**  
The use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown are not warranted to be error free or implying official endorsement from ASEAN Member State.

**SOURCE:**  
Basemap is from global administrative area. Information is generated from many sources including NDMO, International Organisation and news agencies.

Supported by: **Australian Aid**

= 10,000  
 = 50,000  
 = 100,000  
 = 500,000  
 = 1,000,000  
 = 10,000,000

\*pre-emptive evacuated

Knowledge and Change Management during Disaster: Steps for Continuous Improvement in Emergency Operations at AHA Centre

As a learning organisation, the AHA Centre is committed to continuously improve itself based on lessons learned during emergency operations. A typical continuous improvement method in the field of disaster management usually involves an After-Action Review and the creation of ‘lessons learned’ document, which serves as reference for future emergency operations. At the AHA Centre, the steps vary slightly from other ‘learning’ organisations because AHA Centre realises how quick and responsive they must be when facing the next emergency situation, which refrains them from referring back to the knowledge repository. Therefore, the following are AHA Centre’s steps in maintaining continuous improvement while always preparing for the next emergency situation.

DISASTER



DISASTER OPERATION

When the AHA Centre conducts an emergency operation; all their activities are carried out under the guidance of the Emergency Operation Manual, which is continuously revised and improved based on the lessons from previous disaster event.



AFTER-ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

There are generally two After-Action Reviews; one in the Emergency Operation Centre in Jakarta, and the other on the field with the In-Country Coordination Team (ICCT) and the Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT). AAR aims to answer three important questions:

- 1 What went well?
- 2 What could be improved?
- 3 What are the recommendations?

Different methods can be used in attempt to answers these three questions, including workshop, survey, questionnaire, or interviews.

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

This phase attempts to realise the recommendations that are developed during the AAR which eventually brings positive change to the organisation. The organisational change is achieved through the creation/review of policies and procedures or the implementation of improvement projects. Theses continuous improvement efforts exemplify AHA Centre’s commitment as a learning organisation.



CREATION/REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Part of the recommendations suggested during the AAR will be implemented through the creation/review of policies and procedures. Particularly for emergency operation, review will be done on the Emergency Operation Manual which serves to guide AHA Centre staff in conducting disaster operation. Every new or improved policies and procedures will be familiarised to everyone during the regular simulation exercised.

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Part of the recommendations suggested during the AAR can also become projects, and be included in the AHA Centre Work Programme. Projects tend to include activities related to procurement and capacity building (e.g. training).

I didn’t know what to expect as I entered into the humanitarian field, but when I did it certainly felt as if I fulfilled my idealisms.

Mr. Andy Musaffa  
AHA Centre’s Disaster Monitoring and Analysis Officer



Mr. Andy Musaffa is one of the team from the AHA Centre’s Disaster Monitoring and Analysis Division. He has always searched for ways to contribute to the humanitarian field with his skills and knowledge in Geoinformatics. When he came across an opportunity to be a part of the field by chance, he finds the work fulfilling. The Column interviewed Mr. Andy Musaffa as one of the first to join the AHA Centre when it was first established to talk about his journey.

How did you get into this field and how did you choose to do this work?

I studied Geoinformatics when I was in college, I worked at DHL for a while and I saw how Geoinformatics could be used for business. But I remember when the Aceh earthquake occurred, I wanted to help people and contribute to the humanitarian cause, but considering that I’m not a doctor I wasn’t sure how I could use my knowledge and skills in information technology (IT) to contribute to the field. When I graduated from college, I was about to sign a job contract with a private company in Germany, but nearly at the same time, I found an opportunity to work with the French Red Cross for a posting in Indonesia. I felt strongly about the job, I saw that I could use my IT background for a humanitarian cause, to help build and establish an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in Yogyakarta, Jambi and Bali Province. I quickly decided to take a big leap of faith and went back to Indonesia in September 2008 to take that job.

Did you have any expectations and concerns when you entered into the field?

Initially I thought a career in the private sector would be more exciting, I didn’t know what to expect as I entered into the humanitarian field, but when I did it certainly felt as if I fulfilled my idealisms. I have this idealistic view to not harm the environment wherever I work, and in one way or another I have to contribute to humanity and the environment around me. So entering into the humanitarian field somewhat fulfilled that idealism, it’s not merely about profit but something bigger than that.

What was your first experience being deployed onto the field like?

When I was with the French Red Cross, I was sent to Mentawai, Indonesia to respond to the 2010 Tsunami and Earthquake in Sumatra. It was somewhat thrilling, and it was a big first lesson. I learned to prepare myself both physically and mentally in a high risk environment because the waves were still quite strong by the time I arrived in Mentawai, and we got there by boat after traveling for nearly 12 hours. When we arrived, we slept in tent for days with limited resources and unfriendly weather. To move to the other part of the island, we have to walk, take the boat or helicopter which was sometimes cancelled due to the weather. Overall, it was a very challenging environment but I saw how humans are really able to come together in the face of

difficulties to help one another. Some of the volunteers I met had no money but there they were traveling by boat for hours to help another human being, and their sincerity was inspiring to me.

Why did you decide to join the AHA Centre? Has disaster management always interest you?

When I nearly finished the EOC establishment project, I started hearing about this new organisation, working within the field of disaster management on a regional level. I saw there was an opportunity to work in disaster monitoring and I saw it as an opportunity to challenge myself. Where I used to help build the EOC, I wanted to learn working in the EOC, and joining the AHA Centre posed me with that opportunity. Because I joined the AHA Centre when it was really young, there was a lot of room to grow and develop ideas. I also learned from other colleagues with different background and experiences, I think that was interesting to be a part of, and see the organisation grow.

Are there any memorable moments that you can share with us about your time in the AHA Centre?

A memorable moment was when I was deployed to respond to the Typhoon Haiyan disaster. I saw Coconut trees were uprooted all over the areas which looked like scattered matches from the distance, and irons and metal frames folded like paper; it was all because of wind. The smell was also horrible due to decomposing bodies. Despite the gravity of the situation, I was moved and inspired by the amount of help that poured in. There were people whose families were missing, their homes destroyed, but they still came to work to try and help the rest of the victims. Some local officers even slept in their cars in a parking lot because they don’t have much left at home, but they still went to work to help others.

How important is ‘commitment’ when working in the disaster management field? What do you have to commit when entering into the humanitarian field?

Being committed to the disaster management field means I have moral obligations and responsibilities. It’s about committing your time, resources, knowledge, expertise and idealism. In this field, we have to be ready at all times because we can hardly predict what can happen at any given moment. It’s about committing everything when it comes to the disaster management field.

# One ASEAN One Response

## About ASEAN

*The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN among others are to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability as well as to improve active collaboration and cooperation.*

## About The AHA Centre

*The AHA Centre is an inter-governmental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of States, from 10 ASEAN Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Centre was set-up to facilitate the cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.*

## About AADMER

*The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional multi-hazard and policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management in the 10 ASEAN Member States. The objective of AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts.*

## Talk To Us:



[www.ahacentre.org](http://www.ahacentre.org)



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## THE AHA CENTRE

Badan Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknologi  
(BPPT) 1<sup>st</sup> Building, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Jl. MH. Thamrin No.8 Jakarta 10340  
INDONESIA

Tel : +62 21 230500 6

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## AHA CENTRE

ASEAN Coordinating Centre  
for Humanitarian Assistance  
on disaster management