

# ASEAN BRIEFS

ASEAN Military Cooperation on HADR:  
Challenges and Opportunities



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# Executive Summary

- Recent humanitarian crises caused by natural disasters in Indonesia highlight the need for ASEAN militaries to develop a more robust cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- ASEAN military cooperation on HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) is still hindered by a number of challenges including the low level of strategic trust among ASEAN member states, the lack of material capabilities to carry out HADR missions as well as domestic political pressures that have often made their way into the considerations to accept external assistance in times of crisis.
- ASEAN militaries are recommended to place a greater focus on developing their respective HADR capabilities and to enhance interaction in order to increase strategic trust.



## Introduction

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On 28 September 2018, a set of earthquakes, with the strongest magnitude of 7.5 on the Richter scale, struck the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. The earthquakes were followed by a tsunami with waves of up to 6 metres high sweeping shore-lying houses and buildings on its way. Two weeks after the event, confirmed fatalities had reached 2,000 with more than 2 million people affected. Two months before, a series of moderate and strong earthquakes also hit another part of Indonesia on the island of Lombok. More than 500 fatalities were confirmed with more than 3.5 million people affected.

The recent humanitarian crises caused by the natural disasters in Indonesia highlight two important points. First and foremost, they serve as a reminder of the fact that Southeast Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions. One report, for instance, records that from 1970 until 2014 Southeast Asia had witnessed almost 1,500 occurrences of natural disasters with over 400,000 fatalities and millions of people affected. And while individual countries in the region face varying degree of risk, the Southeast Asian region as a

whole accounted for more than fifty percent, or 354,000 of the 700,000 deaths, of global disaster mortalities from 2004 to 2014. The total economic loss was USD 91 billion. Second, they highlight the important roles played by militaries, acting collectively, in disaster response.

Realising that natural disaster-caused humanitarian crisis remains one of the biggest security threats that Southeast Asian countries are facing, it is important to understand the evolving nature of opportunities and challenges in deploying military assets as part of the broader response to humanitarian crisis. This edition of The Habibie Center's ASEAN Briefs reviews the development of military cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the ASEAN region and make a case for a greater cooperation among ASEAN militaries on HADR operation. In doing so, it identifies both opportunities and challenges that ASEAN member states face in promoting the role of militaries in responding to natural disaster-caused humanitarian crises. A set of policy recommendation for ASEAN policy-makers is presented at the end of this policy brief.

## Militaries and HADR

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The international humanitarian community by and large recognizes that the military can play a vital role in disaster response.<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Cuny, who helped found the International Crisis Group, a prominent non-governmental, non-profit organisation working to prevent violent conflicts, once stated that “the use of military forces for humanitarian purposes is a long-established tradition in all corners of the world.” He further



argued that “in the public mind, there is an association between disaster relief and military involvement; indeed, there is often an expectation that military units will assist the civilian population in the immediate aftermath of wars and large-scale emergencies.”

The end of the Cold War found involvement in responding to natural disaster-caused humanitarian crisis making its way into the military lexicon. In addition to other missions such as peacekeeping and counter-terrorism, HADR now fall under the rubric of the ‘military operations other than war’ (MOOTW). In many nations, HADR has been regarded as one of the core competencies of their respective militaries since then.

In 1995, for instance, the United States’ Joint Chiefs of Staff published *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War* -widely known as Joint Pub 3-07- which addressed the purpose, principles, and types of MOOTW expected to perform by the U.S. Armed Forces. It was one of the earliest cases of a military having a specific doctrinal basis for the use of its capabilities across the range of operations short of war. HADR or what is increasingly called “stability operations”, or more expansively “stability, security, transition and reconstruction” (SSTR) operations, are now said to be “a core U.S. military mission” that may involve providing humanitarian and civic assistance to the local populace. In a quite similar fashion, the United Kingdom’s *Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015* sets HADR and rescue missions as among the eight missions of its armed forces. The Indian Navy, meanwhile regards HADR operations as one of the most likely contingencies for which it needs to prepare.<sup>2</sup> Catering for HADR operations has assumed even greater priority since the Asian Tsunami relief operation of 2004 that involved the Indian armed forces.<sup>3</sup> Closer to home, the post-reform Indonesian armed forces regard humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as one of its core tasks.

The primacy of the military in HADR owes to the fact that natural disasters often result in massive physical destruction which renders civilian infrastructures impotent. In such cases, a military force, especially one that is highly mobile and responsive, can provide much-needed on-scene

response first. The military’s special capabilities that include special means of transportation, airlift capabilities, and medical and surgical treatment specialties are often crucial in the immediate period after a natural disaster hits. The rapid deployment of military medical assistance is critical in the early days of any response when trauma victims directly injured by the disaster urgently require treatment. Moreover, it is often the case that in the aftermath of a natural disaster, the military is able to retain its robust chain of command which is crucial in delivering a quick humanitarian response.

## Recent development in ASEAN militaries cooperation on HADR

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The pivotal role of the military in providing a quick response to any natural disaster-caused humanitarian crisis has been well-tested in Southeast Asia. An unprecedented scale of foreign military assets was deployed in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. In 2013, the quick response delivered by foreign militaries also helped ease the burden of the Philippines who were hit by Typhoon Haiyan. Finally, as noted above, the humanitarian relief effort after the earthquakes and tsunami that hit Indonesia’s Sulawesi and Lombok islands in 2018 were the latest showcases of the important roles played by militaries, acting collectively, in disaster response. Learning from their experience in responding to natural disasters in the last two decades, ASEAN member states stepped up their effort in building institutional frameworks to support the military’s involvement in HADR.

## Cases of humanitarian military assistance in ASEAN

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The Indian Ocean tsunami that hit the coastal states, including Indonesia, on 24 December 2004 marked a turning point in international cooperation on HADR. An unprecedented scale of military HADR operation was undertaken in responding to the disaster. Thirty-five states contributed 75 helicopters, 42 ships, 43 fixed-wing aircrafts and more than 30,000 personnel, including air

traffic controllers, medical teams and engineers, to the affected countries.<sup>4</sup> As the most affected country, Indonesia received the largest amount of military humanitarian assistance. According to a report published by the Indonesian authority, 16 militaries of foreign countries, alongside 14 United Nations agencies and 195 foreign civilian humanitarian groups, were involved in the three-month emergency relief efforts in Aceh province alone.<sup>5</sup> The foreign military components worked side-by-side on a common mandate of the relief operation with the role of lead agency for communication and coordination assumed by the Indonesian military or TNI.<sup>6</sup>

The U.S. armed forces were among the first who arrived on the scene. The aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* arrived off the coast of Aceh on 31 December 2004 and dispatched its first helicopter relief flight that day. Three other ships - the USS *Bonhomme Richard*, the USS *Essex* and the USS *Fort McHenry* - supported the relief operations for a month from early January 2005. Twenty-eight helicopters from the ships flew more than 100 missions daily, dropping relief supplies and evacuating people in need of medical help from the communities on the west coast of Aceh.<sup>7</sup> Two US hovercrafts were also deployed to gain access to communities that had been cut off from the rest of the country by water.<sup>8</sup> In total, the U.S. military's efforts included flying more than 2,800 relief missions and treating 2,200 patients from Aceh and other nearby affected areas.<sup>9</sup> When the *Lincoln* left early February, the hospital ship UNSN was deployed in place of the aircraft carrier.

Other regional powers also took part in the 2004 tsunami relief efforts. The Australian Defence Forces (ADF) landed its C-130 *Hercules* at Banda Aceh on 27 December 2004, one day after the tsunami, carrying medical and relief supplies.<sup>10</sup> Within a week, the main body of the ADF contingent - comprising of headquarters, communications and support capability, and a 34-bed field hospital - was in operations in Banda Aceh, while combat engineers arrived on the tank landing ship HMAS *Kanimbla* on 11 January 2005. The ADF had managed to deliver in total an estimated 1,200 tonnes of emergency humanitarian aid in the Aceh and North Sumatra provinces within a month after the tsunami.<sup>11</sup> By June 2005, ADF's contribution

to the tsunami relief effort in Indonesian Aceh and North Sumatera under Operation Sumatera Assist had reached \$37.4 million.<sup>12</sup>

Responding to a request by the Indonesian government for transport support issued on 3 January 2005, Japan's Minister of Defence ordered the dispatch to Banda Aceh of a joint operation comprising of air, land, and maritime elements of Japan's Self Defence Force. The main Japanese relief force arrived on 24 January and started airlift operations two days later.<sup>13</sup>

Indonesia's fellow ASEAN member states also took part in the humanitarian relief efforts. On 28 December, the first Singapore Armed Forces' (SAF) C-130 *Hercules* landed in Medan. On 30 December, the first Singaporean relief flight arrived on Aceh when a SAF Chinok helicopter delivered water, food, and medicine to the people of Meulaboh. SAF also deployed almost its entire fleet of *Endurance* class landing platform dock ships off the coast of Meulaboh. By the end of December, the SAF had deployed a total of three LSTs, six Chinooks, six C-130s and two Super Pumas along with other heavy equipment and engineering plants, 130 medical personnel and 103 engineers to Banda Aceh, Medan and, particularly, Meulaboh. The SAF's helicopters were instrumental to effectively help maintain a constant air bridge between Medan, Meulaboh and Banda Aceh, providing access and transportation of relief supplies and evacuating the injured. Malaysia was also able to send out assistance as the local damage was minimal. It deployed its CN 235 and C-130 *Hercules* aircrafts to transport a military doctor team and relief aid. It also opened its airspace and two airports in Subang and Langkawi to relief operations and acted as a staging base for forward relief supplies to Aceh.

It appears to be a general consensus that the involvement of foreign military assets in Aceh in the aftermath of the tsunami of 2004 made a substantial and significant contribution especially during the acute relief phase. The scale of the involvement of foreign military assets in the relief operation in Aceh was indeed unprecedented to the point of arguably, as one report claims, setting a new paradigm for future humanitarian assistance.<sup>14</sup>



The deployment of foreign military assets also played a pivotal role during the humanitarian response in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013. The United States deployed the USS *George Washington* aircraft carrier and her embarked carrier strike group, along with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, embarked aboard the USS *Ashland* and USS *Germantown*. At its peak, the U.S. military efforts included more than 13,400 military personnel from the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force. 66 aircraft were involved in the mission including the fixed-wing C-17 *Globemaster*, C-130 *Hercules*, and MV-22 *Osprey*, as well as HH-60 helicopters. 12 U.S. Navy vessels responded in all.

Immediately after the disaster hit, the United Kingdom deployed its Type 45 destroyer HMS *Daring* to the Philippines. It was tasked primarily to carry out reconnaissance work using its embarked helicopter to survey the areas which have not yet been reached by international relief teams. The warship was later replaced by the light aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious* which carried seven times as many helicopters as on the HMS *Daring* as well as a facility to process fresh water.

The Australian emergency response under the Operation Philippines Assist included the deployment of defence assets including a C-17 *Globemaster* and a C-130J *Hercules* aircraft. The Royal Australian Navy deployed its sole heavy landing ship HMAS *Tobruk* to transport personnel and equipment to the affected regions and then distributed humanitarian supplies to remote islands. The Army's deployed personnel were also involved in a comprehensive relief effort including

repairing 16 schools, removing 1,302 cubic metres of debris, conducting hazard reduction and plumbing works and assisting the redeployment of non-governmental organisation personnel.

Humanitarian assistance from ASEAN member states to the Typhoon Haiyan relief efforts including the deployment of aircrafts carrying supplies and aids by the Royal Brunei Air Force, the Indonesian Air Force, the Royal Malaysian Air Force, and the Singapore Air Force.

The number of military assets deployed in the most recent disaster relief effort in Sulawesi, Indonesia is lower compared to the previous cases. The humanitarian assistance provided by the foreign militaries, nevertheless, was important in complementing the existing disaster relief response that had been carried out by the Indonesian authority. With about 200m of the runway in Palu damaged by the earthquake, the Indonesian authority specifically requested for heavy-lift capabilities, especially the C-130 *Hercules* from its foreign counterparts. Upon the request, the Singapore Air Force deployed two of its C-130 *Hercules* to deliver humanitarian supplies including bottled water, meals, tents and medical supplies. Both aircrafts then stayed in Palu to transport survivors to other cities in Indonesia as requested by the Indonesian military. The Royal Malaysian Air Force, meanwhile, deployed an A400 *Atlas* in addition to three *Hercules*. The Indian Air Force also deployed its C-130 *Hercules*. Relief materials from India were also delivered using three warships - INS *Tir*, INS *Sujata*, INS *Shardul*-, diverted from their initial mission of training in Singapore. On 7 October, a C-130 *Hercules* from the Japan Air Self-Defence Force landed on Palu to deliver aid. Other C-130 *Hercules* that were deployed including those from the British Royal Air Force and the New Zealand Royal Air Force.

## ASEAN institutional framework on military humanitarian assistance

Learning from their experience, awareness among ASEAN member states of the necessity for cooperation in military humanitarian assistance and disaster relief has significantly increased in

the last couple of decades. Especially after the 2004 tsunami, ASEAN member states have put a lot of effort in shaping institutional principles and norms to govern the deployment of military assets in disaster relief efforts.

The most notable achievement in regional disaster management and emergency response is the Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), which was adopted in July 2005 and later came into force in December 2009. AADMER is cited with approval as “progressive, comprehensive, and, unusually for an instrument implementing disaster risk reduction measures, legally binding” and described as “among the world’s best practice.”<sup>15</sup> In 2011, ASEAN Leaders meeting in Bali agreed to use AADMER as “the main common platform for disaster management in ASEAN with the ACDM [ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management] as the driver in the process to maintain ASEAN’s centrality in these efforts.”

AADMER aims “to provide effective mechanisms to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in life and in the social, economic and environmental assets of the Parties, and to jointly respond to disaster emergencies through concerted national efforts and intensified regional and international co-operation.”

The overall approach of the AADMER reflects the ASEAN’s approach to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity. It highlights the balance ASEAN member states have tried to strike between their interests to maintain national primacy in times of crisis and the push for greater cooperation in the area of disaster relief. Article 3(1) of the Agreement states that “each affected Party shall have the primary responsibility to respond to disasters occurring within its territory and external assistance or offers of assistance shall only be provided upon the request or with the consent of the affected Party.” The primacy of the host country is guaranteed in the Article 3(2) which states that “the Requesting or Receiving Party shall exercise the overall direction, control, co-ordination and supervision of the assistance within its territory.”



AADMER also addresses the issue of military humanitarian assistance although in the most comprehensive way.<sup>16</sup> The Agreement calls upon each Party to earmark military assets, in addition to other types of assets and capacities, which may be available for the regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response. Such earmarked assets and capacities shall be communicated to each Party as well as the AHA Centre (ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance) and updated as necessary by the Party concerned. In order to ensure the primacy of the host country, the Agreement stipulates the assisting parties, in case of involvement of military personnel and related civilian officials, to designate in consultation with the Requesting or Receiving Party, “a person who shall be in charge of and retain immediate operational supervision over the personnel and the equipment provided by it.” The designated person shall exercise such supervision in co-operation with the appropriate authorities of the Requesting or Receiving Party. It also governs that military personnel involved in humanitarian relief efforts to not carry arms and be permitted to wear uniforms with distinctive identification while performing official duties.

The issue of military humanitarian assistance is also addressed in ASEAN cooperation on defence sector. The ASEAN Defence Ministers adopted various concept papers to advance cooperation in HADR. Follow-up workshops on the ASEAN Defence Establishments and CSOs Cooperation

in Non-Traditional Security and on the Use of ASEAN Military Assets and Capacities in HADR as well as a Table-Top Exercise on HADR were subsequently conducted in view of implementing these initiatives.

Finally, while ensuring the centrality of ASEAN, institutional HADR infrastructure is also extended to extra-regional actors. In the inaugural meeting of the ADMM-Plus in 2010, the grouping agreed to include humanitarian assistance and disaster management as one of the areas for potential practical cooperation. In the same year, the ASEAN Regional Forum's foreign ministers agreed to strengthen cooperation on disaster relief.

## Opportunities and Challenges for Future Cooperation

ASEAN military cooperation on HADR has stepped up significantly in the last couple of decades. Recent experiences have also proven the utility of the military in providing assistance in disaster relief efforts. They have also increased the awareness among the ASEAN Leaders on the need to enhance regional institutional framework on military cooperation on HADR.

Natural calamities with the scale equal or even bigger than the ones experienced before will remain likely to occur in the future. A strengthened regional military cooperation on HADR, therefore, should get more attention from the ASEAN Leaders. Such endeavour, however, would not be without challenges. The following part will identify a number of opportunities and challenges that ASEAN member states have in their future effort to strengthen cooperation on military HADR.

### Opportunities

First, the existing cordial relationship among ASEAN member states has proven to be crucial in times of crisis. The decision made by the Indonesian government to approach some of the countries - especially those of Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore - in the aftermath of 2004 tsunami,

for instance, hinged on the fact that their armed forces were relatively well acquainted with the Indonesian culture and institutions.<sup>17</sup> Long-standing relationships between the militaries facilitated early contacts and eased acceptability of foreign military assistance that could have otherwise be hindered by domestic political resistance. The early involvement of the long-standing partners could also help to facilitate the arrival of other parties who might not be as familiar with the local environment.

Second, recent cases of disaster relief efforts in the region have shown that the deployment of foreign military assets have been in accordance with the generally-agreed principles and norms. They were, for instance, deployed only at the request of the affected country or with the affected country's consent. They were also integrated with and supported the existing disaster-relief responses. In the case of the 2004 tsunami, for instance, the Indonesian Armed Forces' role as the coordinator of the relief efforts was respected by the foreign militaries. During the emergency phase after the tsunami, the TNI chaired daily coordination meetings and managed the crucial Air Task Order (a prioritized list of tasks for air assets) for all foreign military assets in Aceh.<sup>18</sup> In the context of ASEAN, with its long-standing adherence to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs, a guarantee that the primacy of the host country would be acknowledged and respected is an important requirement for future cooperation.

Third, regional military cooperation on HADR would contribute to the broader agenda of maritime security cooperation in the region. Recent cases of disaster relief efforts in the region have proven the utility of naval assets as the reliable provider of humanitarian assistance. Unlike fixed-wing air transports that often have to rely on prepared airstrips -which may not always be available in a disaster zone- naval forces can be deployed off the coasts to disembark personnel and material onto the affected areas.<sup>19</sup> Naval assets such as landing platforms have often proven to be a convenient choice as a useful means to transport goods, equipment, and personnel to the affected areas. Most of these warships are also

capable to accommodate medium to heavy-sized helicopters that could be utilized to provide airlift and reconnaissance operations.

In addition to that, naval assets are also generally capable to handle bigger quantities of aids compared to land-based platforms. During the 2004 tsunami relief effort, for instance, the U.S.' *Abraham Lincoln* carrier strike group and the *Bonhomme Richard* expeditionary strike group delivered more than six million pounds of relief quickly and efficiently. The Chinook helicopters, with their long range and large payload, moved large quantities of essential emergency supplies from Medan and Banda Aceh to isolated areas in Aceh.

A stationed warship can also serve as the base of operations. The Australian Defence Force's HMAS *Kanimbla*, for instance, provided a range of capabilities such as medical facilities and sea base for equipment and personnel that would otherwise have had to be based ashore.<sup>20</sup> Sea basing could also eliminate the requirement to substantially increase a foreign military's footprint ashore and minimise the associated logistic support challenges as well as potential political hurdles. Like the HMAS *Kanimbla*, the SAF's LST fleets allowed its personnel and equipment to be based at sea, reducing footprints ashore and minimizing the need for domestic logistical support.

The utility of naval assets in disaster relief effort provides an opportunity for the regional states, some of which are involved in maritime-based strategic competition, to strengthen the habit of working together. As part of the military operations other than war, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief cooperation serve the interests of regional states to foster a climate of stable



cooperation. Increased interaction among the regional navies might diminish misperception that could otherwise occur and, in the end, leads to greater stability in the region.

## Challenges

First, domestic political consideration has increasingly influenced the approach regional states take with regards to foreign military assistance during disaster relief efforts. This is especially the case in countries where the opposition to the incumbent regime is strong. The growing nationalist and xenophobic sentiments apparent in some of the countries in Southeast Asia has further complicated the respective governments' decision to request for foreign military humanitarian assistance. Given such dynamics, it is in the political interest of the incumbent regime in these countries to appear competent to their respective constituency in order to maintain their legitimacy vis-à-vis the oppositions.

The political sensitivity and relationship with a host nation can boost or degrade the humanitarian efforts exponentially.<sup>21</sup> This fact is especially true if the host nation does not have a cordial working relationship with the foreign country providing military assistance.<sup>22</sup> The challenge is for soldiers on the ground to stay clear and remain politically neutral while continuously providing humanitarian aid.<sup>23</sup>

Second, despite its altruistic nature, there are still concerns that the deployment of military assets might be used by the respective contributing countries to further their strategic interests. Some countries have indeed made this clear. The United Kingdom's Joint Doctrine Publication 3-52: Disaster Relief Operations Overseas: the Military Contribution, for example, explicitly states that

In addition to the altruism aims of disaster relief, there may be specific UK interest in contributing, and being seen to contribute, to a disaster response... A UK military contribution to a disaster response will be a visible and attributable representation of UK response.

Another example is when the U.S. military decided to extend its HADR mission in the Philippines after 2013 Typhoon Haiyan by signing the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). The Agreement allowed the U.S. military access to bases in the Philippines including the stationing of troops, and prepositioning of weaponry. Having been concerned by the expanding presence of the Chinese military in the South China Sea, a line of argument can be made that post-Haiyan U.S. access to bases in the Philippines had benefitted the U.S. strategically beyond the initial humanitarian aims.

Third, coordination between the militaries involved in relief efforts as well as between the military and civilian agencies still need to be strengthened. A post-disaster environment is a complex one where civilian physical and institutional infrastructure are often unable to deliver their services while many parties are keen to get involved in the relief efforts. Some of these parties might be well-prepared and experienced in relief efforts while some others might be not. Some of them might already have experience working together while the others might have not. The challenge is to put in place an institutional framework to govern the involvement of different parties in relief efforts. The capacity to implement such institutional framework should also be strengthened.

The deployment of military assets into the complex environment of post-disaster areas would naturally be challenging. There is serious concern, for instance, that the involvement of military personnel and assets poses a potential threat to the core principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence that underpin the work of humanitarian agencies.<sup>24</sup> Humanitarian and military approaches to security often diverge, creating tensions between the two types of actor despite shared goals in disaster response.<sup>25</sup> Military approaches to security tend to focus on deterrence, or on physical (kinetic) security.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, humanitarians particularly non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, tend to rely on acceptance-based security, which seeks to gain the consent of all stakeholders in an operational area.<sup>27</sup> The aforementioned institutional framework, therefore,

should also address the issue of coordination between the militaries and civilian agencies.

Finally, there is still a disparity among ASEAN member states in terms of institutional disaster management capacity as well as military assets and expertise to conduct HADR operations. Countries that have experienced natural disaster-caused humanitarian crises more frequently like Indonesia have developed a relatively advanced institutional infrastructure to accommodate humanitarian assistance. The disparity with other ASEAN member states, however, is quite significant. Moreover, the physical capabilities in terms of military platforms to be used in humanitarian assistance are also not evenly distributed. Despite their obvious utility in HADR operations, for instance, only a few ASEAN navies muster significant large amphibious landing ship capabilities.<sup>28</sup> While countries like Indonesia and Singapore possess relatively sizable and modern amphibious fleets, other ASEAN navies, given their respective strategic outlook and threat perception, have put greater attention in developing conventional warfighting assets.



	LANDING PLATFORMS/DOCKS	LANDING SHIPS	LANDING CRAFTS	TOTAL
<b>Brunei</b>	0	0	4	4
<b>Cambodia</b>	0	0	1	1
<b>Indonesia</b>	5	19	55	79
<b>Lao</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Malaysia</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Myanmar</b>	0	0	9	9
<b>Philippines</b>	2	4	11	17
<b>Singapore</b>	4	0	23	27
<b>Thailand</b>	1	2	14	17
<b>Vietnam</b>	0	7	12	19

*Table 1 ASEAN Naval Amphibious Capabilities (Source: The Military Balance 2018)*

## Recommendation

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The preceding parts of this paper have observed ASEAN's experience of military involvement in humanitarian assistance and evolving institutional framework that governs it, the development of the future risk of natural disaster-caused humanitarian crisis in the region, as well as the set of opportunities and challenges for future cooperation on military HADR. Based on this observation, this edition of The Habibie Center's ASEAN Briefs advises ASEAN Leaders to consider taking the following measures.

- ASEAN member states should increase the frequency and scale of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises involving both military and civilian personnel. Through increased interaction, it is hoped that ASEAN militaries and humanitarian agencies would gain better understanding and develop the habit of working together. Such exercises should also be as inclusive as possible, involving not only ASEAN member states but also extra-regional parties. The aspect of inclusiveness is particularly important to negate the possibility of certain actors using engagement with ASEAN member states to advance their respective unilateral strategic interests. In other words, inclusive interaction would prevent the rise of suspicion and mistrust that could undermine future disaster relief efforts.
- ASEAN militaries and ministers of defence should draft and release publicly documents outlining their respective approach and strategy for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Domestically, such documents would provide guidance for planning and conducting military support to humanitarian relief efforts. They will govern the allocation of available military resources for disaster relief efforts. To external audiences, such documents would signal states' resolve to contribute their military assets in future humanitarian assistance. They will also serve as a means to show transparency and, hence, increase confidence among ASEAN member states and beyond.
- ASEAN member states should enhance cooperation to strengthen their capacity in delivering humanitarian and disaster relief efforts.

In their experience, ASEAN member states have benefitted from humanitarian assistance provided by capable extra-regional states. Given the geographical proximity, however, ASEAN member states would be benefitted from the greater self-sufficiency in terms HADR capabilities. ASEAN militaries ought to reach disaster zones within Southeast Asia faster than their extra-regional counterparts and should be spearheading recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.<sup>29</sup> In addition to physical capabilities such as military platforms tailored for HADR missions, ASEAN member states should also work together to increase their respective national and collective institutional infrastructure to ensure future military humanitarian assistance will be accommodated effectively.





# Endnote

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## About The Habibie Center

The Habibie Center was founded by Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie and family in 1999 as an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation. The vision of The Habibie Center is to create a structurally democratic society founded on the morality and integrity of cultural and religious values. The mission of The Habibie Center are first, to establish a structurally and culturally democratic society that recognizes, respects, and promotes human rights by undertaking study and advocacy of issues related to democratization and human rights, and second, to increase the effectiveness of the management of human resources and the spread of technology.

## About ASEAN Studies Program

The ASEAN Studies Program was established on February 24, 2010, to become a center of excellence on ASEAN related issues, which can assist in the development of the ASEAN Community by 2015. The Habibie Center through its ASEAN Studies Program, alongside other institutions working towards the same goal, hopes to contribute to the realization of a more people-oriented ASEAN that puts a high value on democracy and human rights. The objective of the ASEAN Studies Program is not merely only to conduct research and discussion within academic and government circles, but also to strengthen public awareness by forming a strong network of civil society in the region that will be able to help spread the ASEAN message. With the establishment of ASEAN Studies Program, The Habibie Center aims to play its part within our capabilities to the ASEAN regional development.

## About Talking ASEAN

Talking ASEAN is a monthly public dialogue held at The Habibie Center in Jakarta. Covering a wide array of issues related to ASEAN, Talking ASEAN addresses topics of: Economic Integration, Socio-cultural, & Democracy, human rights and regional peace, among others. Featuring local and visiting experts, Talking ASEAN is one of a series of twelve dialogues regularly held each month and open to a target audience consisting of ASEAN officials, foreign ambassadors & diplomats, academics, university students, businesses, and the media.

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



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