

Earthquake 7.7M Response – Myanmar



29 March – 16 April 2025

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1. Background Information on the emergency

1.1. Description of disaster

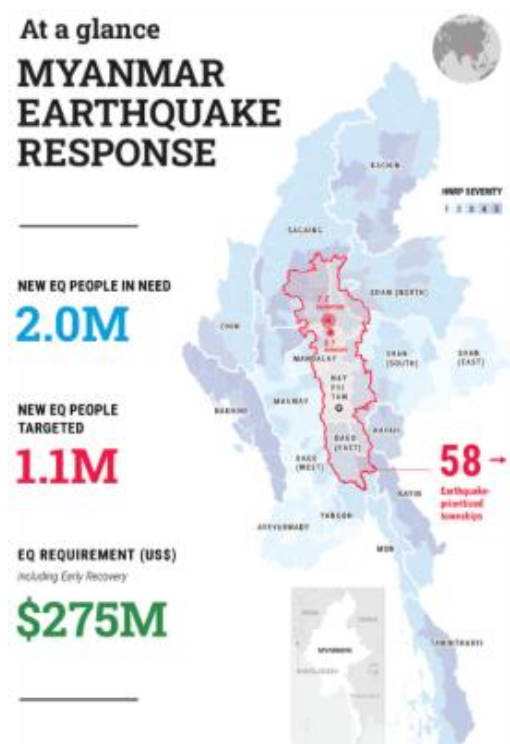
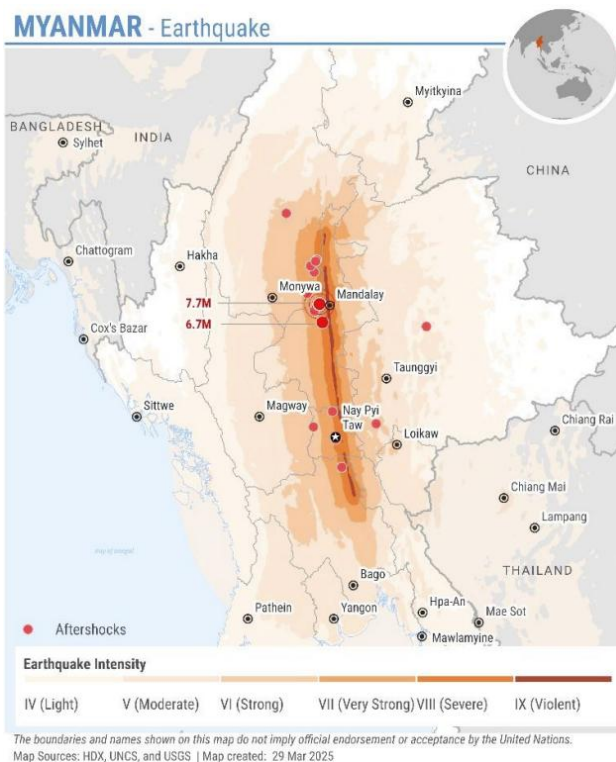
On 28 March at approximately 12:50 PM local time, a powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.7 struck central Myanmar, with its epicentre located near the cities of Mandalay and Sagaing at a shallow depth of 10 kilometres. The earthquake was widely felt across Myanmar and neighbouring regions. A second earthquake, measuring 6.4 in magnitude, hit further south just minutes later.

The earthquakes caused extensive destruction, with widespread damage to homes and essential infrastructure - in areas where over 17 million people live. Most of the fatalities occurred in the Mandalay area. In response, the State Administration Council (SAC) declared a state of emergency in the Bago and Mandalay Regions, Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, Sagaing Region, and parts of Shan State, appealing for international aid. Early assessments showed that Mandalay International Airport had been severely damaged, leading to the suspension of commercial flights. Key infrastructure such as bridges, roads, universities, hotels, heritage and religious sites, and public buildings in both urban and rural locations had been either heavily damaged or destroyed. Thousands of people at that point were sheltering in open areas or streets due to the loss of their homes or fear of aftershocks.

Utility systems and communication networks had been significantly affected. Electricity and water supply had been disrupted, even in the Yangon Region. Landline, mobile, and internet services were unstable. Damage to the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay expressway had caused serious travel disruptions, with cracks and surface deformities halting bus services. As the extent of the disaster became clearer, it revealed the urgent need for humanitarian aid to assist those impacted.

Over 6.3 million people required immediate assistance and protection due to the earthquakes' impact, including 4.7 million people who were already in need and an additional 2 million newly affected. As of 6 April, ten days after the disaster, official reports stated that at least 34,500 people had lost their lives, more than 455,000 had been injured, and over 200 remained missing. However, the actual numbers were likely significantly higher due to communication outages and limited reporting, which hindered a complete understanding of the disaster's impact.

1.2. Impact



In central and northwestern Myanmar, especially in Mandalay, Magway, Nay Pyi Taw and Sagaing, hospitals were struggling to cope with the influx of people injured during the earthquake. In Sagaing Township, it was reported that over 70% of structures had sustained significant damage. Humanitarian emergency supplies and humanitarian partners were mobilized to support affected communities in Mandalay. National cluster coordinators were working to ensure the efficient delivery of assistance. Humanitarian partners, the UN, INGOs and local NGOs were planning to conduct an inter-agency joint assessment and implement an immediate response, using available resources already in Mandalay.

In southern Shan, multiple townships, including Kalaw, Hopong, Hsihseng, Langkho, Lawksawk, Nyaungshwe, Pinlaung, and Taunggyi, had been affected. Search and rescue operations led by local community groups were ongoing, while partners conducted rapid needs assessments. Nyaungshwe, Kalaw, and Pinlaung were among the hardest-hit areas. The immediate humanitarian needs that were present included clothing, blankets, kitchen sets, emergency shelters, WASH items, and food assistance.

2. Deployment Request and Mission Objectives

2.1. The request for an UNDAC deployment and its context

The earthquake and its aftershocks exacerbated people's needs significantly. In response, the SAC declared a state of emergency across key regions and appealed officially for international assistance on 29 March 2025.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) alerted the UNDAC system on 28 March to identify a team to deploy in support of the OCHA Myanmar Country Office in the coordination of the response in the affected areas. The team travelled to Bangkok, Thailand, as a staging location, then proceeded to Myanmar. A 31-member UNDAC team was deployed, arriving in Myanmar by 5 April. The team included 15 UNDAC personnel (11 from OCHA), six associated partners (including WHO-EMT, WFP-GLC and SDC Environmental Experts), and 10 operational support partners (TSF, MapAction and Atlas Logistique). The team supported the response under the leadership of OCHA Myanmar, working alongside national and international humanitarian actors. Personnel were positioned in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, and Mandalay to strengthen coordination and support response planning. Additional surge support was provided remotely and in person by OCHA's Regional Office for Asia-Pacific (ROAP) and from headquarters in particular the Response Support Branch (RSB) and Assessment, Planning & Monitoring Branch (APMB) within the Coordination Division, the Operations & Advocacy Division (OAD).

2.2. Mission Objectives

OCHA activated an UNDAC team to support the OCHA Myanmar Country Office in the coordination of the response in the affected areas. The preliminary mission objectives for the team at the start of the deployment were:

1. Support the coordination of the interventions of Urban Search and Rescue teams
2. Support EOCs and/or sub-OSOCCs early in the response to enable coordination, meetings.
3. Liaise between international coordination decision-makers and the affected authorities to facilitate participation in coordination and sharing of priorities
4. Provide coordination support to specialist international coordination teams, such as Emergency Medical Teams.
5. Liaise with civil-military actors so that military assets and actions were used in service of agreed humanitarian objectives and principles
6. Hold regular coordination meetings and promotion of good humanitarian practices and standards (such as PSEA, gender mainstreaming and protection)
7. To ensure the sustained functioning of the coordination system after UNDAC's departure, through appropriate handover of outstanding tasks and activities to partners.
8. Support the localisation of disaster management and strengthening of its capacity
9. Provide decision makers with evidence-based needs assessments and analysis
10. Establish information management systems and IT to enable actors to communicate, collaborate and share information

11. Provide advice on environmental issues caused by the earthquake and recommend on lifesaving and long-term solutions for them

2.3. Summary of the initial plan of action

Upon arrival and discussion with Myanmar CO (after eight days), UNDAC objectives focused on two key areas:

1. Through collaboration with ASEAN-ERAT, support the coordination of USAR and Emergency Medical Teams including information management capacities through the existing MOU of UNDAC operational partner MapAction with the AHA Centre.
2. Provide support to the coordinated humanitarian response under the leadership of the HC, in support of the nationally led response. This support was provided through regular coordination work among UN system members, particularly OCHA. The UNDAC team was designed to be self-supporting, even in a post-disaster context. Therefore, the team was largely composed of logistical, security and medical experts to support the deployment and facilitate the operational set up for the in-country OCHA and humanitarian team. OCHA colleagues within the UNDAC team provided gap filling support for certain functions, allowing rest and recuperation of some of the existing team themselves affected by the earthquake.

The UNDAC set up included a small team embedded within the OCHA office in Yangon, with the rest of the team divided within Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. After 2-3 days some members of the Nay Pyi Taw team were reallocated to Mandalay. The final staff allocation was: Yangon: 3 staff (Public Information, Admin, Report/HPC); Nay Pyi Taw: 5 Staff (Humanitarian Affairs Officers (HAO), Support); Mandalay: 12 Staff (HAOs, Assessment, Report, Security, Support). TORs and priorities of UNDAC members were agreed as follows on 5 April:

- At all locations:
 - Provide additional reporting capacities across all areas of the response:
 - USAR
 - EMT
 - Humanitarian logistics and Relief items
 - Gender/Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)/Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)
 - Logistics, IT/Communication and office support to OCHA offices and staff
 - Assessment and analysis (A&A) and augmented GIS analysis and mapping capacities for OCHA and partners.
- Mandalay:
 - Context & Rationale: The cluster approach is in place, and we relevant many of the cluster activities attempted to scale up to cope with the additional needs of people affected.
 - UNDAC Role:
 - Supporting duty of care for OCHA staff – staff had been affected and with the office damaged, they were staying in tents in front of the office, and living and working in difficult conditions.
 - Expanding coordination support to the national staff. In non-SAC areas, the UNDAC team reinforced the work and capacities of staff.
 - Focusing on strengthening the localization efforts of the humanitarian community with dedicated capacities
 - Supporting the USAR teams' demobilization, "beyond the rubble" activities, reporting and exit phase with 3 USAR experts from INSARAG classified teams as well as the provision of EMT coordination through three embedded EMT coordinators
- Nay Pyi Taw:
 - Context & Rationale: As there were no regular humanitarian operations in Nay Pyi Taw, OCHA had one staff member based in the capital city usually, and had additional surge support from in country re-deployed to the capital to support efforts. Coordination needed to be strengthened temporarily for the short duration of the emergency phase of the response
 - UNDAC Role:
 - Set up office with equipment brought by UNDAC
 - Strengthen coordination capacities with Humanitarian Affairs Officers (incl. senior level).

- Yangon:
 - Context & Rationale: Yangon hosts the OCHA Country Office as well as other international agencies.
 - UNDAC Role:
 - Strengthen the administrative capacities of the OCHA CO with the provision of a Senior Admin officer responsible for the UNDAC mission's administrative issues and the provision of additional back up to the Head of CO administration.
 - Augment the capacities of the CO in the preparation of the Flash Appeal with the support of an HAO experienced in the region.
 - Provide dedicated public information capacities with a Senior Multilingual Public Information Officer (PIO) to address the international media and support.

In Mandalay, as the mission evolved, additional and more specific requirements were identified:

- Assessment & Analysis: Supported the ongoing processes to understand people's needs..
- Advocate for increased access and presence in Sagaing City: direct follow up and support to the implementation of the advocacy calls done during the ERC and HC visit. The UNDAC team visited Sagaing in UN marked vehicles and visiting people in settlement sites (Monastery, schools, etc.), exploring options for UN presence (office, warehouse) and engaging with the Department of Disaster Management (DDM).
- Situation/Reporting: Providing inputs to the OCHA situation report with information collected via partners/meetings and reporting on UNDAC activities.
- Coordination: Support the existing coordination mechanism facilitation and note taking of meetings for the interagency and the area Inter Cluster groups. UNDAC, via the EMT coordination cell, supported liaison with USAR teams and EMT. In that context, the liaison was done bilaterally as there were no USAR Coordination or EMT Coordination Cells at the request of the authorities.
- Engagement with partners; The UNDAC team provided information to in-country and out of country partners in particular ASEAN and EU response teams as well as other responders.

The UNDAC team held daily meetings. The team also participated in global coordination meetings with headquarters in New York and Geneva and the OCHA ROAP.

3. National Response

3.1. National response coordination mechanism

In the aftermath of the 2025 earthquake, the State Administration Council (SAC) activated national emergency coordination structures to oversee the disaster response. The DDM under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR) played a central role in coordinating search and rescue, damage assessments, and distribution of emergency relief. Coordination at the sub-national level was led by the de-facto authorities at regional and state levels, with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) acting as a key response partner. However, limited access, ongoing conflict, and capacity constraints significantly affected the overall coordination and delivery of assistance. Interaction with international humanitarian actors occurred primarily through established channels with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and OCHA, though bureaucratic and political challenges remained.

3.2. National response and relations with international community in country

The national response was led by the SAC, which declared a state of emergency in the most severely affected areas, including Bago Region, Mandalay Region, Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, Sagaing Region, and parts of Shan State. Response efforts of the de-facto authorities focused on emergency rescue operations, damage assessments, and the distribution of basic relief supplies. The Myanmar Red Cross Society and various local civil society organizations supported these efforts on the ground.

The SAC issued a formal request for international assistance due to the widespread destruction and humanitarian needs. This created a limited but critical window for international engagement. Despite the call for assistance, the operational environment remained highly constrained. Access restrictions, bureaucratic hurdles, and ongoing

insecurity limited the presence and activities of international actors. Many organizations were forced to rely on remote support mechanisms or local implementing partners to deliver assistance.

OCHA launched a Flash Addendum to Myanmar HNRP, outlining the strategy to support earthquake-affected populations and requesting an additional USD 275 million in funding. The addendum highlighted escalating humanitarian needs, new caseloads, and early recovery priorities. UNDAC team deployed in country a week after the earthquakes and demobilized by mid-April. A few members remained in-country to provide targeted technical support, while others continued to support remotely.

3.3. Capacity Building activities undertaken during the mission

The short duration of the mission did not allow for specific capacity building activities. The UNDAC team focused on strengthening the existing coordination mechanisms which were led by national staff. In doing so, the UNDAC team ensured the UNDAC methodology was applied in support of the response and as such contributed to some knowledge transfer with the different stakeholders in the response.

3.4. Handover of responsibilities

UNDAC members in Myanmar concluded their on-ground deployment on 16 April (with MapAction on 10 April). The UNDAC Team Leader worked closely with the CO and OAD to plan for surge support and extend select team members where necessary. As a result, three UNDAC members, two from OCHA (providing support for Assessment & Analysis and Humanitarian Financing) and one from the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), extended their missions to the end of April. Additionally, two members continued to offer remote support for work related to the humanitarian programme cycle and public information. The remote support by the A&A cell, led by APMB, also remained active until the end of April.

3.5. Highlights, constraints, and challenges

The effectiveness of the national response was hindered by significant challenges, including damaged infrastructure, ongoing conflict, limited logistical capacity, and access restrictions in several regions. These issues were particularly acute in conflict-affected areas such as Sagaing, where insecurity constrained both national and international humanitarian access.

Telecommunications and internet disruptions obstructed humanitarian coordination and operations, while damaged roads and debris were limiting access to affected areas and delaying needs assessments. Many hospitals and health facilities had been extensively damaged or destroyed, and the response was further constrained by a severe shortage of medical supplies, including trauma kits, blood bags, assistive devices, essential medicines, and tents for health workers.

3.6. Recommendations for national capacity building

OCHA should support the establishment of dedicated, area-based coordination hubs in affected areas, staffed primarily by national personnel and supported periodically by international actors to strengthen national ownership and ensure effective interfacing with global systems. Development of a protocol for two-way information flow between sub-national hubs and national coordination bodies is crucial to ensure that operational realities shape strategic decisions. When an UNDAC team is part of a response, OCHA should continue to integrate UNDAC leadership into national coordination structures such as the HCT and inter-cluster mechanisms early in the response to enhance synergy with national actors. Furthermore, cross-cutting priorities, including cultural sensitivity, gender, protection, PSEA, and environmental safeguards, should continue to be embedded into national response activities through briefings, field engagement, and inclusion in the PoA. Empowering national structures and ensuring their leadership in disaster response will improve coordination, sustainability, and resilience in future crises.

4. International Humanitarian Response

4.1. Overview of the international humanitarian response

The earthquakes and aftershocks deepened existing humanitarian needs considerably. In response, the SAC declared a state of emergency across key regions and appealed for international assistance on 29 March 2025. Efforts to mount an international response were further complicated by the political situation and related restrictions on access. OCHA led coordination efforts, launching a Flash Addendum to the 2025 Myanmar HNRP, requesting an additional USD 275 million to support 58 priority townships impacted by the earthquake and aftershocks.

The de-facto authorities announced that the international USAR response efforts in Myanmar would transition to a recovery phase starting Friday 4 April.

Emergency relief was provided by UN system members, including UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and UNHCR, alongside international NGOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement partners, particularly the IFRC and Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS). ASEAN-ERAT mobilised to support DDM Myanmar in rapid assessment, coordination, and facilitation of incoming relief items. UNDAC team was deployed to support coordination and needs assessment, with several members extending their missions or providing remote support for humanitarian programming and analysis. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) visited the country the day the UNDAC team arrived on 5 April and visited OCHA, HCT, as well as affected areas in Mandalay and Naypyidaw.

4.2. Flash Appeal and CERF

The ERC allocated USD 5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support urgent response efforts. The first OCHA Flash Update was released on 29 March 2025 the day after the earthquakes

On 14 April, OCHA issued a “Flash Addendum” to the Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRP), detailing the HCT strategy to support those affected by the severe earthquakes and subsequent aftershocks. This addendum also outlined additional funding needs for humanitarian organizations responding to the crisis. Of the 58 townships prioritized, 30 had already been flagged for urgent humanitarian needs in the revised 2025 HNRP. These areas were home to 4.3 million people in need prior to the disaster. However, the widespread destruction caused by the earthquake significantly deepened existing vulnerabilities and created urgent needs among populations previously not included in the response plan.

Although many of the people and planned interventions were already part of the 2025 HNRP, the addendum updated the plan to reflect the needs of the newly affected populations, and the interventions required. As a result, the expanded funding requirements for the earthquake response had been estimated at \$275 million, which also included support for early recovery efforts.

4.3. Highlights, constraints, and challenges

Despite strong engagement from international partners, the response faced significant access challenges due to conflict, security constraints, and administrative barriers. Many humanitarian organizations relied on local partners for aid delivery, emphasizing the critical role of national responders in reaching affected communities.

4.4. Recommendations of the team on the strengthening of the ongoing response

To enhance the effectiveness of the ongoing humanitarian response, the UNDAC team recommended strengthening strategic coordination with the HCT, ensuring early and inclusive engagement with key actors, and establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and planning tools. Internal communication should be streamlined through function-based coordination and improved information flow. Field-level coordination must be reinforced by deploying focal points to priority hubs and leveraging local expertise.

5. Team Activities and Functional Review

5.1. Management Function

UNDAC's coordination efforts were generally seen as positive, particularly in facilitating international collaboration and identifying strategic priorities. The feedback appears to focus on evaluating the effectiveness of UNDAC's coordination, information sharing, and strategic support during emergency operations.

Key observations:

- **Initial Coordination and Communication**

Early communication with OCHA Myanmar could be improved, particularly regarding team composition and stand-down decisions as this would have contributed to better team composition being deployed.

- **Deployment phases and Planning**

The deployment highlighted the importance of distinguishing between three phases: pre-arrival, pre-deployment (in Bangkok), and in-country deployment.

- Pre-arrival: the first 36–48 hours were marked by internal discussion about team size, and composition and structure.
- In-country: Coordination was initially challenged by unclear priorities, geographical dispersion, and limited connectivity. Early engagement with the HCT and heads of agencies could have improved early strategy alignment and accountability. The importance of connecting with UNDSS early and using existing relationships to maintain awareness and control was also emphasized. Finally, logistics and administration were seen as crucial to UNDAC mission management due to the fast pace and movement involved, and need to be better arranged in future.

- **Team Composition and Integration**

The importance of flexibility and a “no regrets” approach are highlighted, which allowed the team to adapt and make the best use of available resources. A diverse team composition, combining OCHA, non-OCHA, national actors, and regional partners, which strengthens local engagement, and multilateral cooperation proved strategically beneficial. However, integration during pre-deployment was limited, due to varying travel arrangements.

- **Leadership and Support Structures**

The TL and DTL faced significant demands, managing both internal and external coordination (with OAD, CRD, Humanitarian Coordinator, etc.). Delegation and structured support functions are needed to reduce this demand. Additionally, daily full-team meetings could have been more streamlined, focusing on functional reporting.

- **Recommendations:**

- Early involvement of the team lead and clearer functional and reporting structures are recommended. In the context of Myanmar, characterized by a protracted humanitarian crises with existing humanitarian structures and ongoing operations, with multiple OCHA offices involved in the response (CO, RO, Liaison Office in Indonesia, HQ's) it is important for the UNDAC team to establish as soon as possible the mission objectives and priorities, determine which part of the organisation brings what resources (staff, equipment – onsite and remote), clarify expectations and agree an organisational structure that is most appropriate to respond as “one OCHA”, as an integrated team to the emergency. Office and team leadership should discuss and agree this as a first priority at the start of the response and regularly revisit arrangements.
- Additionally, given the strong CO presence in the locations affected, the heads of sub-offices remained in their leadership roles.
- To reinforce an integrated team approach, establish daily video calls between the UNDAC team in Bangkok and the OCHA teams in Myanmar and Bangkok to enhance internal coordination and share situational updates.
- Ensure consultative decision-making by team leaders and OCHA managers, especially regarding team composition, priorities and activities, captured in a joint plan of action for the response.
- Strengthen early engagement with key stakeholders and clarify roles and expectations across all phases of deployment.

- ERS should give attention to the personal preparedness that is expected from both UNDAC members as well as Operational and Associated Partners, including situation awareness, knowledge of the UNDAC methodology (Handbook) and tools, and minimum self-sufficiency with tents and personal supplies.
- Formalize good practices and improve support systems to better manage similar missions.

5.1.1. Team Dynamics

- Team Strengths
 - The team quickly adjusted to a new mission and worked effectively despite the challenging context.
 - The team was able to reach affected areas, once in-country.
 - The team maintained cohesion and high morale despite the tough conditions
 - The team members were skilled, cooperative and proactive in taking over additional tasks for the success of the mission.

Challenges and Recommendations

- While the team demonstrated strong commitment and expertise, the absence of a clear action plan at the outset limited the ability to fully leverage individual skills and created uncertainty. As mentioned above, a more structured approach, including defined objectives and clearer communication of roles, could have enhanced coordination and impact.

5.1.2. Team Integration

The mission demonstrated strong collaboration between UNDAC members, OCHA ROAP surge and associated partners including UNDSS, WFP, WHO, and Humanosh. The team worked across multiple locations - Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay - showcasing a coordinated effort to support the humanitarian response. Despite staggered arrivals, the team worked effectively to address urgent needs.

- Key insights & Recommendations
 - Improved planning and better integration of partners, especially in key locations like Mandalay, would have strengthened support to national counterparts using the presence of UNDAC partners such as Atlas Logistique or MapAction. Clearer collaboration frameworks and more consistent engagement with the OCHA office could have helped align efforts and avoid fragmentation. The mission's flexible approach deviated from standard UNDAC procedures, which, while intentional, introduced some coordination challenges due to the lack of a structured and integrated planning. Furthermore, assigning management roles to individuals without prior UNDAC experience also affected team alignment, despite their overall and technical competence.
 - Early briefings and sharing team structures, such as organigrams, can improve coordination and effectiveness.
 - Anticipating deployment needs and involving regional experts in scenario planning strengthens response readiness.
 - Centralizing key documents supports faster integration and reduces pressure on field teams.

5.1.3. Administration, Finance, Living and Working Conditions

ERS and RO provided strong administrative and logistical support throughout the mission, and regular remote check-ins were helpful. This mission was a collaborative effort among ERS Geneva, ERS Regional AP team in Bangkok, OCHA ROAP, and OCHA Myanmar Office, which allowed for an effective division of tasks across the three locations mentioned.

Medical service provided early preparation for ERS missions to ensure staff safety and reduce last-minute stress. The medical service team urged that travel clearance requests should be submitted in advance to allow time for

vaccinations, malaria prescriptions, medical kits, and health consultations. Geneva-based and remote UNDAC members can access tailored support, including first aid training and destination-specific medical advice.

- Challenges & Recommendations
 - During the mission, some administrative and logistical challenges emerged, offering valuable lessons for future deployments:
 - Travel logistics: Emergency deployments require flexible and accessible travel arrangements. Current UN systems may benefit from review at a broader organizational level to better support field teams. Medical Clearance Process: The current system for medical clearance proved less adaptable to emergency contexts, highlighting the need for improved coordination with relevant units and compliance with existing medical clearance procedures of the UN Medical Service.
 - Communication and reporting lines: Some confusion arose due to overlapping administrative instructions and limited information sharing. Strengthening delegation and streamlining communication channel could support this in future missions.
 - Staff movement tracking: Ensuring real-time movement updates on team locations is essential for safety and coordination. A centralized system or dedicated communication channel could support this need.
 - Time zone coordination: Managing logistics across time zones remains a challenge. Enhanced planning and support mechanisms can help mitigate related stress and delays.

5.1.4. Wellbeing, Safety & Security

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - UNDSS deployed an international security coordination officer with UNDAC and redeployed a (local) Field Security Associate from the UNDSS Office in Myanmar to provide tailored support to the UNDAC team in the Mandalay/Sagaing hub and set up an Operational Radius for the earthquake response. Support was also provided in assessing the need and strategic and operational value of a standing presence in Sagaing City to improve sustainable access to vulnerable populations impacted by the earthquake.
 - Strong collaboration and contextual awareness regarding safety and security, particularly praising the relationship with key individuals and the team on the ground. All movements for the entire mission were done according to UNDSS protocols at the international and national levels.
 - ROAP and ERS staff purchased necessary items in Bangkok (tents, first aid kits, mosquito nets, etc.) for the wellbeing of the deployed members to field locations. Moreover, regular checks from ERS staff based in Bangkok and Yangon were conducted, ensuring the wellbeing of the deployed members.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - For those less experienced in such environments, it would have been helpful to have simple, clear security guidelines or SOPs. Clearer guidance on safety and security protocols would have improved preparedness and understanding.
 - Safety and security measures should be contextualized and adaptable to the local context. Future missions should better tailor security protocols and more actively listen to local colleagues and partners who have been working on the ground. Ultimately, local insight should complement formal systems to ensure practical safety in the field.
 - A dedicated briefing on security rules and UNSMS should be a standard activity in future deployments.
 - The team should have explored hiring its own translators to support their engagement, as they each relied on the OCHA national team, which added to their work loads and stress. Based on lessons from the Turkiye earthquake response to ensure duty of care, options could have been explored with contracting translators via UNV or UNDP.

5.1.5. Relations with other actors (UN RC, Regional Org. etc.)

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - The UNDAC team operated in a highly sensitive and politically complex environment, requiring careful and adaptive coordination with key actors. Direct engagement with authorities was limited but handled professionally through informal, low-profile approaches that maintained neutrality and trust.
 - The team coordinated closely with ASEAN-ERAT and the AHA Centre, navigating sensitivities to support mutual objectives while reinforcing complementarity. Collaboration with the EU, particularly the EU Joint Research Centre, was effective in enhancing remote assessment through geospatial analysis.
 - HPC and Inter-Cluster Coordination Group engagement was limited, and late interaction with the HCT and agency heads hindered early alignment.
 - In terms of area-based coordination, the team maintained operational presence across Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, and Mandalay despite access constraints. Field teams demonstrated strong initiative, though structural clarity and country office engagement could be improved.

- Challenges & Recommendations

There was good engagement with the AHA Centre and ERAT teams, although the exchange of information remained limited due to the sensitive nature of the context.

- The team's engagement with ASEAN and Myanmar authorities during the mission encountered some challenges. Despite this, the team, especially those in the field, demonstrated commendable dedication and professionalism in their engagement with other stakeholders, such as ASEAN-ERAT. Given the complex and the sensitive environment, formal engagement with the de-facto authorities was limited. Nonetheless, the team navigated these constraints with tact and resilience, maintaining a careful balance. Their approach, marked by humility, professionalism, and a strong commitment to multilateral values, was positively acknowledged by ASEAN and local officials.
- OCHA to coordinate with local authorities and ASEAN before external team deployments to avert visa delays and diplomatic friction; define explicit liaison roles for all USAR modules.
- To bolster future responses in the ASEAN region, OCHA should mainstream ASEAN centrality, expand joint training on the ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan on Disaster Management, and formalize coordination protocols to safeguard interoperability, donor confidence, and regional credibility. Similarly, explore interoperability in OCHA surge plans and UNDAC deployments with early involvement of ROAP and the OCHA Indonesia/ASEAN Liaison Office early. Jointly develop structured information-sharing guidance between OCHA/UNDAC and ERAT for joint assessments and planning, replacing ad-hoc exchanges. The "Operational guidelines for field cooperation between EUCP and UNDAC teams" can serve as an example of collaboration with another regional response mechanism.
- Related to above, continue to position OCHA as a principled, interoperable actor as donor funding and regional response for disaster-management mechanisms (e.g. ASEAN, SADC, CDEMA, EUCPM, CEPREDENAC, SPC) expand.
- Ensure all UNDAC team members are aware of regional response mechanisms and their disaster-response role, structure, and leadership to avoid misunderstandings and foster credibility with regional actors, e.g. briefings and guidance in UNDAC Handbook.

5.1.6. PSEA

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - Due to time constraints during the team's stay in Bangkok, the PSEA briefing was shared via email rather than through an in-person session.
- Challenges & Recommendations

- PSEA considerations were integrated during the mission; however, they were not consistently visible across all activities. The team emphasized PSEA and accountability principles in coordination meetings, but noted the need for more dedicated time and consistent integration, especially given the varying levels of familiarity with PSEA among partners.

5.2. Situation Function

5.2.1. Assessment & Analysis (incl. Remote A&A cell)

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - A remote A&A Cell was established in Geneva. The A&A cell, led by APMB/Needs and Response Analysis Section (NARAS) coordinated with the UNDAC team, the Myanmar CO, ROAP, and partners throughout the response to support the humanitarian response operation in Myanmar both onsite and remote. The onsite partners coordinated the information findings from assessments, environmental hazard analysis, and re-establishment of the Myanmar assessment working group.
 - The UNDAC team in-country supported the needs assessment planning and implementation process.
 - Collaborated with partners to model the earthquake's initial impact contributing to the analysis of the Sedawgyi Dam breach, which was shared with the UNDAC team, RO and Myanmar country office.
 - Twelve updates were produced, tailored to CO/RO requests and served as the main source of secondary analysis and will be essential in future activations.
 - The integration of satellite damage analysis was a crucial step forward in the overall vision of joint analysis. The analysis assessed structures in over 520 village tracts in 36 of the 58 priority townships, identifying over 20,000 damaged structures and addressing the need for dam assessments since physical access was restricted. Furthermore, it was used to inform gaps in RNA coverage and re-prioritization of field assessments, and vice-versa for prioritization of locations for remote sensing analysis.
 - Data findings allowed a comparison between people's needs in urban and rural area.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - Consultations with the HQ, RO and CO are necessary at the onset of a shock to properly develop a PoA for the response before initiating assessments. To prioritise the products and services of the A&A cell, it would be necessary to identify what is required for the response and to create a decision tree for each core element of the response. A complete response organigramme is always helpful to establish clear reporting lines to the Myanmar CO.
 - A specific assessment discussion with the CO should be established and led by OCHA APMB, with RO, within the first 24 hours to identify existing tools, assess the knowledge of the process and structure, and make appropriate recommendations. This will also help provide visibility on what is expected to be found during the A&A operation.
 - It is recommended to have an OCHA IMO from the region deploying as part of UNDAC team (in addition to existing in-country capacity), to work together with a remote A&A cell coordinator from OCHA NARAS, the field A&A coordinator from UNDAC/OCHA, and alongside an assessment coordinator and IMO in the UNDAC team (either UNDAC member or A&A cell partner). It is recommended that A&A cell partners supporting the mission are available for the entire duration of the UNDAC mission.
 - There were challenges for data-sharing with ASEAN ERAT and AHA Centre, as the team had to carefully manage sensitivities. Going forward, maintaining in-country ownership for engagement with regional organizations will be important.
 - Resource Allocation: Significant time and resources were diverted to the Flash Addendum, delaying assessment efforts.

5.2.2. Information Management

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - Information management support was jointly coordinated between field teams and remote actors (FIS and HQ). Kobo and Power BI platforms were utilized to support data collection, visualization, and product development.
 - Coordination with CO IMO staff was attempted, however, capacity was limited due to parallel tasking.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - At the onset of the deployment, a specific discussion is to be held with ERS, ROAP, FIS and CO to determine what OCHA IM capacity is available and required for the overall response, to allow for an integrated team approach to information management.
 - In-country deployment of a ROAP IMO would have been beneficial for internal collaboration and coordination, given that the UNDAC team did not deploy with an IMO.
 - IM personnel in Yangon were overextended due to competing demands, particularly related to the Flash Addendum.
 - Define clear IM roles and responsibilities within the POA and the organigram.
 - Develop SOPs to promote an integrated OCHA response approach through early confirmation of specific mission objectives and plan of action clarifying initial activities, staffing, roles and responsibilities and organigram to also inform surge requirements for UNDAC, Regional Offices and other OCHA surge staff.

5.2.3. Reporting

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - A virtual logbook was piloted to enhance internal visibility of daily activities and outputs and was positively received.
 - Coordination with both the RO and CO on various reporting outputs, including SitReps and Flash Updates.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - A clear POA, an organigram and SOPs between OCHA offices and UNDAC are necessary for future missions to improve clarity and coordination. Institutionalising joint operating principles, including guidelines for media engagement and donor communication, will help maintain a unified and accurate messaging strategy, minimising the risks of misinformation. The agenda calls for more strategic and intentional team composition, ensuring clear functional balance, designated focal points, and improved gender representation to promote inclusivity and effectiveness.
 - For the CO, identify and train national staff in advance to support communications during emergencies and simplify and accelerate content clearance processes, particularly in emergency contexts. Agencies receiving OCHA funding should be required to share usable multimedia content.
 - Senior OCHA leadership should be encouraged to take calculated communication risks and support field-level messaging and promote awareness that effective communication is directly linked to public fundraising and overall visibility.

5.2.4. Media

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - Having a public information officer (PIO) on the team was useful, especially given the context.
 - Multiple media interviews were facilitated during the mission. The PIO coordinated closely with the CO to ensure that all public messaging was appropriate and aligned.
 - Maintained regular contact with the SCB in HQ for messaging consistency and visibility.
- Challenges & Recommendations

- PI staff was restricted to Yangon, limiting on-the-ground filming and affecting content quality. where field access is limited, alternative arrangements for content collection and verification should be planned in advance.
- Emphasize the importance of having spokesperson on the ground from Day 1
- A dedicated PIO staff member should be deployed to the epicentre of the disaster within the first 24 hours to enable real-time reporting and ensure timely visibility.

5.3. Operations Function (incl. Coordination)

5.3.1. USAR Coordination

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - The activities focused on information management of international USAR teams since the USAR coordination was led and managed by the de-facto authorities.
 - USAR coordination was supported informally but effectively, with early deployments of INSARAG classified teams supporting readiness.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - Challenges around roles, reporting lines, and coordination during the mission.
 - Encourage INSARAG to promote flexible coordination, depending on the context and operational environment. OCHA and UNDAC can support in establishing field coordination and communication.
 - Unfortunate miscommunication and lack of coordination with the German @Fire USAR team that deployed bilaterally to Bangkok and was ready to support a Reception and Departure Center (RDC) at Yangon airport resulted in the team arriving without visas or due notice, which caused confusion and additional work for authorities and CO. Any new or potential partners involved in parts of the deployment and coordination should be thoroughly briefed, deploying with UNDAC members and give prior notice to ASEAN and local authorities.

5.3.2. Environment Emergencies Coordination

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - The mission started with a solid briefing and deployment to Bangkok. Valuable contributions were made by the EU Joint Research Centre, particularly through their flood simulations, which significantly supported the analysis. Cooperation with the satellite imagery processing team from MapAction was especially strong and essential, without their support, conducting any meaningful remote analysis would not have been possible.
 - An environmental expert was integrated into the UNDAC team and initially worked remotely from Bangkok to prepare datasets, coordinate with specialized actors, and analyse satellite imagery. This groundwork was crucial in identifying priority areas for concern. Later, during a field mission to Yangon and Naypyidaw, the expert identified key hazards such as damaged infrastructure, hazardous facilities, and a dam breach—though the resulting flooding remained contained within the riverbed and did not affect populated areas.
 - Environmental support was strongly coordinated through and under the UNDAC mechanism, with robust backing from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) and collaboration with partners such as Swiss Development Cooperation and Atlas Logistique. The remote environmental expert delivered a comprehensive geological briefing to the A&A Cell in the initial days of the response, which proved highly valuable.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - Suggest setting up UNDAC-like contracts for experts from the EET regional rosters in future missions to ensure legal clarity and sustained support.
 - Challenges with the on-site access for assessments.

5.3.3. Emergency Medical Teams Coordination

This was the first emergency where WHO (EMT Secretariat) deployed a WHO EMT coordinator as associated partner with an UNDAC team, as was foreseen in the LOA between WHO EMT Secretariat and RSB (2024). An EMT Coordination Cell (EMT-CC) chaired by the Ministry of Health was launched in Nay Pyi Taw on 8 April with UNDAC/WHO facilitation-the first EMT-CC ever established in Myanmar.

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - EMT coordination was operational from day one, engaging over 14 EMTs, issuing regular SitReps, and liaising with the WHO Country office.
 - The EMT component supported field assessments, security SOP development, and provided independent communication and coordination tools for deployed teams and local partners.
 - Humanosh FAST was integrated into the UNDAC structure, joined coordination meetings, and contributed to operational planning and field assessments.
 - Provided direct medical support and preparedness assistance to the UNDAC team.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - For future emergencies, it is recommended to have a clear definition of roles between WHO, Humanosh, and UNDAC, a cooperation SOP and a structured pre-deployment briefing with all parties would benefit the effectiveness of the mission and clarify and define exit strategies and handover mechanisms from the start.
 - EMTCC was not formally introduced to WHO, OCHA CO or MoH.
 - With regards to military EMTs and CMCoord: there was limited CMCoord engagement despite a military presence, but it is suggested to better utilize CMCoord in similar contexts.

5.3.4. Humanitarian Logistics

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - The UNDAC team was composed of six associated partners (GLC-WFP, SDC environmental specialists, WHO-EMT and UNDSS), who provided expertise in humanitarian logistics coordination, safety and security, environmental emergency management and EMT coordination.
 - WFP/Global Logistics Cluster deployed as part of the UNDAC team as Associated Partner, although WFP was not closely integrated into the team's mission.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - Information Management on the incoming relief cargo consolidation: clarification on ways of working in these cases would be needed to inform better the decision makers and partners.
 - Partner deployment/travel: Better communication and transparency from OCHA on the anticipated travel movements into Myanmar would have helped partners coordinate their travel to ensure they continue to be integrated with the rest of the UNDAC team's mobilization. Support partners, who do not have the same scope of UNDAC training as an UNDAC member, should deploy into the country of mission alongside an UNDAC member.
 - OCHA and operational partners (e.g. DHL) should continue working with ASEAN and the AHA Centre to enable more predictability on entry and exit processes during emergencies.

5.4. Team Support Function

5.4.1. IT support

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - Operations spanned multiple locations with effective ICT support from TSF, ensuring connectivity under challenging conditions.

- Challenges & Recommendations
 - Suggest providing clear and consistent instructions on folder structure at the start of deployment.

5.4.2. Logistics Support

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - Helpful logistics support and travel arrangements have been provided by HQ and RO.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - There were some delays in domestic travel due to internal approvals and logistics coordination.

5.4.3. Coordination amongst support partners

- UNDAC team's Activities
 - Collaboration occurred both remotely and on-site. The team engaged with multiple support partners, including the CO, ROAP, FIS, and MapAction.
- Challenges & Recommendations
 - To enhance coordination and clarity, it is recommended to establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities among UNDAC, OCHA RO and CO, particularly in areas such as information management and reporting when Operational Partners are supporting this. This should include the development of Terms of Reference (TORs) and coordination structures for all support personnel, including remote team members, prior to deployment. Doing so will help ensure a more cohesive and efficient response across all operational locations.

6. Team's main limitations/constraints

The UNDAC team operated in a highly complex and volatile environment, facing a range of operational, logistical, and contextual challenges that affected the overall effectiveness of the mission. One main constraint was the absence of a clearly defined PoA and TOR at the outset capturing the overall OCHA response objectives and priorities, bringing together the capacities and (human) resources of CO, RO, UNDAC and remote support HQ and partners). This contributed to initial coordination challenges and delayed strategic alignment.

Access limitations, stemming from security concerns, infrastructure damage, and ongoing conflict, particularly in Sagaing, posed significant barriers to field mobility and humanitarian operations. Additionally, disruptions to telecommunications impacted coordination and timely information-sharing.

Engagement with national actors and ASEAN partners was shaped by the sensitive political landscape and limited integration mechanisms. Nonetheless, the team demonstrated adaptability, professionalism, and a strong commitment to supporting the national response in a highly complex operational environment. Leadership effectively balanced internal management with external coordination demands, underscoring the importance of strengthened delegation and support structures in future deployments.

7. Conclusion

The UNDAC mission to Myanmar provided critical support to international humanitarian coordination under complex and challenging conditions. Despite the operational challenges faced at the beginning of the mission, the team managed to contribute significantly to strengthening coordination structures at the national and sub-national levels, particularly in Mandalay and Sagaing, where access was limited and response capacity was strained.

By embedding in key hubs and collaborating with OCHA, ASEAN-ERAT, and other partners, the team enhanced the delivery of technical support, facilitated information flow, and bolstered humanitarian planning during a period marked by uncertainty and political sensitivity. The deployment provided vital support to the EMT and USAR operations and environmental assessments, established early reporting and assessment frameworks, and advocated for increased access and duty of care for national staff. The remote A&A cell provided critical analysis for decision-making and advocacy. The team's flexibility, self-sufficiency, and multi-disciplinary composition enabled it to navigate the volatile context and support localization efforts through capacity building of local responders and promoting inclusive coordination mechanisms.

UNDAC's presence helped reinforce OCHA's coordination role in the response, contributed to the development of the Flash Appeal, and played a key role in building trust among stakeholders through consistent field engagement, especially in hard-to-reach areas. Overall, the team's added value lies in its ability to bridge strategic and operational gaps, foster collaboration among diverse actors, and support a more coherent and locally grounded humanitarian response.

In future responses where UNDAC deploys in contexts where other OCHA offices and sections are leading/involved (CO, RO, Liaison Offices, HQ's) it is important to jointly agree and establish as soon as possible the mission objectives and priorities, determine which part of the organisation brings what resources (staff, equipment – onsite and remote), clarify expectations and agree an organisational structure that is most appropriate to respond as "one OCHA", as an integrated team to the emergency. Mission leadership should discuss and agree this as a first priority at the start of the response and regularly revisit arrangements with key humanitarian partners, particularly in light of the humanitarian reset.

8. Acknowledgements

The success of the UNDAC mission in Myanmar was underpinned by the strong collaboration and contributions of several key partners, each of whom played a vital role in enabling the response. The OCHA Myanmar Country Office provided critical leadership, contextual insight, and coordination support throughout the mission, despite being significantly affected by the disaster itself. The OCHA ROAP, ERS Geneva and Bangkok offered consistent remote and on-site support, including administrative, logistical, and strategic guidance, which enabled effective team deployment and sustained operations across multiple hubs.

Telecoms Sans Frontières (TSF) was instrumental in ensuring ICT connectivity in a challenging communications environment, including coordinating telecom assessments and donating vital equipment (e.g., satellite phones, Starlink units) to facilitate common services for all agencies. Their adaptability and technical support greatly enhanced operational continuity. MapAction made essential contributions to information management and geospatial analysis, supporting early assessments and coordination products, although their early departure created a notable gap. Atlas Logistique provided essential logistics and team support throughout the mission in all locations, as well as key support to the assessment and analysis process and activities. Humanosh provided critical medical support to both the team and affected populations, actively participating in field assessments, coordination meetings, and the setup of EMT coordination.

The partnership with ASEAN-ERAT and the AHA Centre facilitated joint coordination efforts and helped reinforce localization strategies through peer learning and knowledge exchange. The EU Joint Research Centre contributed valuable flood simulations and remote sensing support that informed rapid needs assessments. Additionally, UNDSS played a vital role in ensuring safety and security, including tailored field guidance and supporting the team's strategic engagement with sensitive areas.

Collectively, these partners demonstrated professionalism, flexibility, and commitment to principled humanitarian action. Their contributions were essential to enabling the mission's objectives and advancing a coordinated, inclusive, and context-sensitive emergency response.

ANNEXES

1. Team Composition

[Include there all UNDAC team members, also include Operational Support partner and associated members. Do specific the mission dates for Associated partners and other staff that might have supported only temporarily .

Source: UNDAC staffing table Responsible: TL

Name	Country/organization	Location/ role	Mission dates
Severine Rey	OCHA	Team Leader	29 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Lucien Jaggi	OCHA	Deputy Team Leader	29 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Nidhirat Srisirojanakorn	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	2 – 15 Apr 2025
Tristan Arao	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	31 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Daniel Gilman	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	29 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Roberto Colombo	OCHA	Information Management Officer / Assessment and Analysis	30 Mar – 25 Apr 2025
Narciso Rosa-Berlanga	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer/ Localization	29 Mar – 29 Apr 2025
Jose Maria Garcia	OCHA	Admin and Finance	29 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Saviano Abreu	OCHA	Public Information Officer	30 Mar – 11 Apr 2025
Esty Sutyoko	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer / Coordination	1 – 18 Apr 2025
Pan Thanda Htun	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer / Coordination	28 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Aanchal Khurana	Ireland	Stood down	30 Mar – 2 Apr 2025
Jeonghee Jin	South Korea	Stood down	31 Mar – 3 Apr 2025
Kian Fatt Lee	Singapore	Urban Search and Rescue Coordination	30 Mar – 10 Apr 2025
Sebastian Mocarquer	Chile	Urban Search and Rescue Coordination	29 Mar – 10 Apr 2025
Grigory Korolkov	Russia	Urban Search and Rescue Coordination	28 Mar – 10 Apr 2025
Reto Wegmann	Switzerland	Information Management and Security focal point	29 Mar – 17 Apr 2025
Philipp Grossenbacher	SDC	Environmental Expert	30 Mar – 11 Apr 2025

Edmondo Perrone	WFP	Logistics Cluster Coordinator	31 Mar – 16 Apr 2025
Roy Cosico	WHO	EMT Coordination	30 Mar – 16 Apr 2025
Marcin Grzegorz Blenski	Humanosh	EMT Partner / health specialist	29 Mar – 16 Apr 2025
Michal Walter Chelstowski	Humanosh	EMT Partner / health specialist	29 Mar – 16 Apr 2025
Brian LaGuardia	UNDSS	Security coordination officer	3 – 17 Apr 2025
Emmanuel Pajot	Atlas Logistique	Operational Partners / logistics	30 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Pierre Trouche	Atlas Logistique	Operational Partners / logistics	30 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Elie Lenski	Atlas Logistique	Operational Partners / logistics	30 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Paola Mazzaglia	Atlas Logistique	Operational Partners / logistics	30 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Simon Veilleux	Atlas Logistique	Operational Partners / logistics	30 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Anne-Laure Maiola	Atlas Logistique	Operational Partners / logistics	31 Mar – 18 Apr 2025
Martin White	Atlas Logistique	Operational Partners / logistics	1 – 18 Apr 2025
Richard Peter Martin	MapAction	Operational Partners / IM officer	30 Mar – 12 Apr 2025
Harry Ray Matchette-Downes	MapAction	Operational Partners / IM officer	30 Mar – 12 Apr 2025
Sebastien Latouille	Télécoms Sans Frontières	Operational Partners	30 Mar – 18 Apr 2025

1. Initial Mission Terms of Reference (M-1 alert)

1. Support the coordination of the interventions of Urban Search and Rescue teams.
2. Support EOCs and/or sub-OSOCCs early in the response to enable coordination, meetings.
3. Liaise between international coordination decision-makers and the affected authorities to facilitate participation in coordination and sharing of priorities.
4. Provide coordination support to specialist international coordination teams, such as Emergency Medical Teams.
5. Liaise with civil-military actors so that military assets and actions are used in the service of agreed humanitarian objectives and principles.

6. Hold regular coordination meetings and promotion of good humanitarian practices and standards (such as PSEA, gender mainstreaming, and protection).
7. Sustained functioning of the coordination system following UNDAC's departure.
8. Support the localisation of disaster management and strengthening of capacity.
9. Provide decision makers with evidence-based needs assessments and analysis.
10. Establish information management systems and IT to enable actors to communicate, collaborate, and share information.
11. Provide advice on environmental issues caused by the earthquake and recommend lifesaving and long-term solutions for them.

2. Others Relevant Documents such as:

- a. **Myanmar Earthquake: HNRP Flash Addendum - Issued April 2025**