



Disaster Relief and JICA

Striving to Make a Difference

Emergency Disaster Relief - Providing timely support to disaster victims worldwide



Response to the yellow fever outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2016)



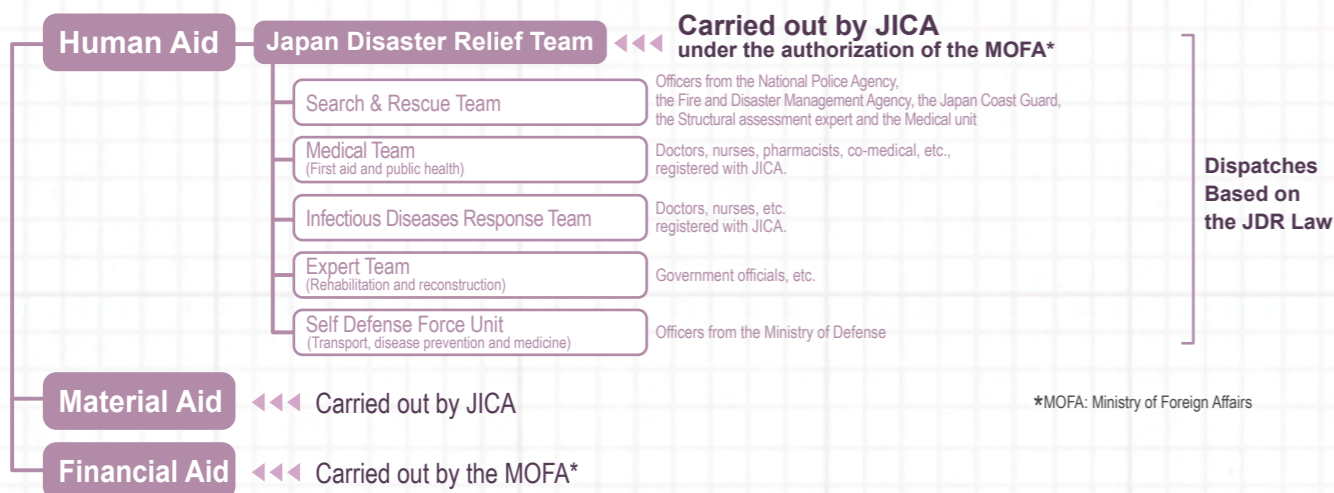
Response to the earthquake in Nepal (2015)



Response to the cyclone in Vanuatu (2015)

In spite of countless and continuous disaster-preparedness efforts being made everywhere in the world, natural or man-made disasters can still threaten people's lives anytime and anywhere. Japan is prone to natural calamities, and many countries and regions around the world have consoled and aided Japan in meeting such misfortune. We have expertise in taking responses to disasters and are thus committed to assisting the victims of such disasters wherever they may occur, making the most of our experience. JICA is responsible for administering Japan's disaster relief operations in response to requests from any affected government/region or international organization following a natural or man-made disaster. JICA's emergency disaster relief entails the provision of people and supplies.

Japan's International Disaster Relief



Dispatch of the Japan Disaster Relief Team

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) offers a variety of Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Teams, dispatching either alone or in combination to meet the needs of disaster-affected areas. When a large-scale disaster occurs overseas and the government of the affected country or an international organization requests Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to provide assistance, and MOFA deems it appropriate to dispatch a JDR Team, it will consult with the other ministries and agencies concerned for obtaining cooperation in dispatching a JDR Team under the Law Concerning Dispatch of the Japan Disaster Relief Team (enacted on September 16, 1987; last amended on December 22, 2006). JICA conducts such dispatch and other necessary tasks following the decision of Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Since the very first dispatch of the Japan Medical Team in 1979 by the Japanese government to assist Thailand in handling the influx of Cambodian refugees, Japan's Disaster Relief operations have evolved, thanks to domestic stakeholders who share JICA's passion for assisting disaster victims.

■Rescue Team

Trained personnel search for, locate, rescue, and then provide emergency treatment for disaster victims including their transport to safety. The team consists of MOFA and JICA personnel, police officers, firefighters, coast guard rescue workers, medical staffs, and structural engineers capable of leaving Japan immediately. The team also includes rescue dogs.

■Medical Team

Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, co-medicals and coordinators that have registered voluntarily with JICA constitute team along with personnel from MOFA and JICA. The team provides direct medical care to casualties and, when appropriate, helps prevent the spread of disease or infection. Medical Team has the longest history among JDR Teams.

■Infectious Diseases Response Team

The team was established in October 2015 in response to the epidemic of Ebola hemorrhagic fever that spread across West Africa in 2014. The team has five functions necessary to offer a wide variety of assistance: the four specialist functions of "epidemiology," "laboratory diagnosis," "medical treatment and infection control," and "public health response" as well as the function of "logistics" to achieve self-sufficiency in their activities

■Expert Team

Expert Team has a dual role—helping to predict and prevent disasters before they may occur, and advising the authorities concerned on emergency response and early recovery in case of a disaster. Technicians and researchers recommended by the Japanese government, local municipalities, and/or private companies with required expertise provide assistance including predicting possible volcanic eruptions, assessing possible damage, or otherwise revealing the vulnerability of buildings to earthquakes.

■Japan Self Defense Force (JSDF) Unit

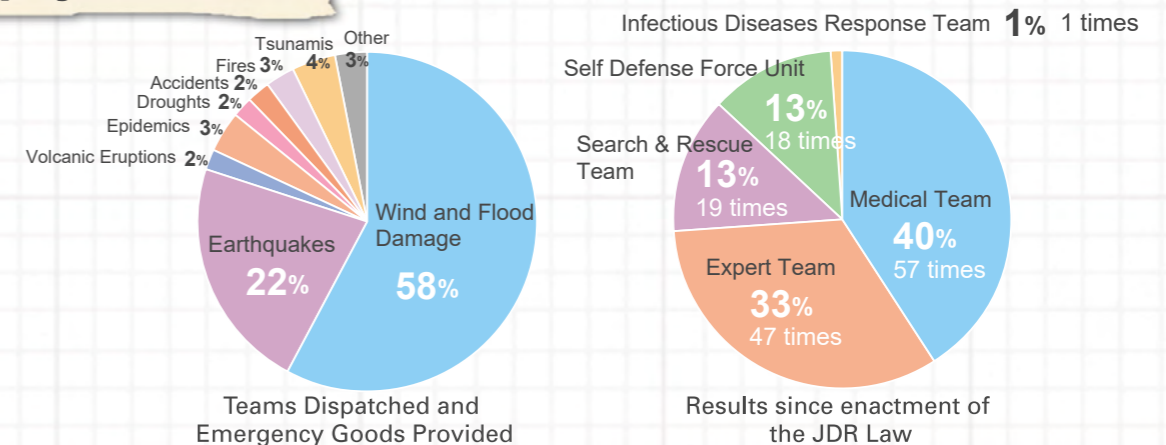
JSDF unit is typically dispatched only in large-scale emergencies where they provide heavy-duty logistical assistance with aircraft and/or ships, and assist in the prevention of epidemics.

Provision of Relief Goods

Apart from the deployment of JDR Teams, JICA also provides emergency relief goods to these areas as required. To facilitate the rapid and reliable provision of a large volume of emergency relief items, reserve supplies must be procured and properly stockpiled in advance at locations as close as possible to disaster-prone areas. SEVEN priority goods are stockpiled—tents, sleeping pads, plastic sheets (tarpaulins), blankets, portable water containers (plastic jerry cans), water purifiers and water purifying agent. JICA stores these emergency goods at warehouses overseas.



Deployment Statics



Statistics compiled since the enactment of the JDR Law in 1987. Valid as of May 2017.

Voices and thanks from disaster areas

Many countries offered their help to Japan during the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. “Care for each other”—the most important quality in disaster relief—is universal.

JDR Teams have been deployed to disaster-stricken areas worldwide. Those sites were usually chaotic and faced many hardships, yet each Team undertook its relief activity vigorously in order to help the affected population, who also helped us by showing their gratitude and support.



1 Standing by each other

Earthquake in New Zealand, 2011

Following the earthquake that struck Christchurch, New Zealand, on February 22, three batches of JDR Rescue Teams were deployed successively to work with the New Zealand Fire Service and police, as well as with the other international teams on the ground. On March 11 when the third JDR batch withdrew from its base of operations and was about to prepare for the return home, a gigantic earthquake (later named the Great East Japan Earthquake) devastated northern Japan. Upon arrival in Japan the following day, several members continued straight to the Tohoku region for subsequent duty. International teams from New Zealand and the United States who were in Christchurch working with JDR Teams then shifted their attention to Japan in responding to this mega disaster. International collaborative responses made in both countries reaffirmed the already existing bond among international disaster assistance stakeholders.



2 Japanese experts helped saving important infrastructure

Flood in Thailand, 2011

A massive scale of flooding that would occur only once every 50 years greatly damaged Thailand in the latter half of 2011. One JDR Expert Team for maintenance of infrastructure such as airport, subway and waterworks was deployed to make recommendations to the authorities concerned, in order to protect these pieces of infrastructure from the flooding. The other Expert Team consisted of officials from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, and corporations assisted in discharging water from flooded industrial parks, residential areas, and farmland. The response took place under a glaring sun, requiring teamwork between Japanese experts and Thai crews, and involving the use of 10 drainage pump vehicles from Japan that had also helped to pump out water left from the tsunami caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake earlier that year. Local people showed their support and appreciation for the team by offering beverages and hanging banner that read “With our thanks to the people of Japan.” When the team ceased its operation, the representative of the locality said with great emotion, “We were at our wits’ end facing this water immersion, but thanks to you, we can now resume farming one month earlier than projected.”



3 The repayment of Japan that experienced the disaster

Typhoon in the Philippines, 2013

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan reached one of the highest intensities ever recorded and directly struck the Philippines, affecting as many as 16.08 million people. JDR immediately dispatched Medical Team to Tacloban city on Leyte Island, provided of relief supplies, and dispatched expert teams in the field of early recovery and oil spill incidents. Some of the team members were victims of Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. A doctor said he joined the mission in return to assistance that Japan received at the disaster.



4 Access to remote areas

Cyclone in Vanuatu, 2015

On March 13, 2015 the extremely powerful Cyclone Pam hit the Republic of Vanuatu. JDR dispatched a medical team. As Vanuatu is an island nation, difficulties were anticipated transporting supplies to and moving around the affected area. After arriving in Vanuatu, the team split into two groups: one moved to the central hospital in Port Vila, the capital city, and the other to the Mauna Health Post on Pentecost Island. On foot and by boat, the latter group also visited remote locations with poor access to medical support to meet the needs of locals who required immediate medical attention. This was the first time JDR ever dispatched a team formed specially to provide mobile clinic services. A team member said, “Being small enabled our team to think together as one about what we should do to meet the immediate needs in front of us here.” The mayor of Gamarumauwa, one of the villages the team visited, also remarked that this Japanese medical team had been the first relief group to reach their village after the cyclone and that they were immensely grateful to the team for travelling all the way to their nearly inaccessible inland location.



5 Cooperation save lives

Earthquake in Nepal, 2015

A powerful 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal on April 25. JDR began to provide emergency relief to the affected area immediately after the disaster struck in numerous ways, including dispatching a rescue team, medical teams, and an SDF Unit as well as providing emergency relief supplies. The rescue team, made up of 70 people and 4 rescue dogs, departed on April 26, the day after the earthquake, and arrived in Nepal on April 28 amidst the post-disaster confusion and turmoil. Up until they left the country on May 8, they carried out operations under savage conditions, including dealing with rubble and debris by hand. This was the first time JDR dispatched medical teams with surgery, dialysis and ward functions. In total, two medical teams treated 987 people and performed 22 operations (including operation support provided in local hospitals). Some team members had helped victims of the 1995 Greater Hanshin Earthquake and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake as part of their professional duties or as aid workers and thus participated in these medical relief activities with passion to put to use abroad what they had learned from their experience in Japan as well as to return the favors that Japan had received from countries overseas during those disasters.



6 First dispatch of Infectious Diseases Response Team

Yellow fever outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2016

In DR Congo, the team worked in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Biomedical Research (INRB). Due to a lack of reagents, it is impossible for INRB to carry out tests and diagnoses of the yellow fever epidemic. The reagents the team brought with them from Japan enabled INRB to resume the tasks. Another problem was that there was an insufficient quantity of vaccines. WHO advised that one-fifth the standard dose of vaccine should be used, and the Japanese side provided technical support to help local health authorities do so. The activities carried out by the Japanese team were highly regarded by the government of DR Congo, WHO, and other relevant authorities.



Number of the dead and the affected are based on data of CRED EM-DAT

A Brief History of Japan's Disaster Relief

1979

The first Japan Medical Team (JMT) is formed

An influx of Cambodian refugees fled to Thailand during their country's civil war. Based on its report, public and private hospitals, the Japanese Red Cross, JICA and other organizations form the first Japan Medical Team (JMT). Over the next several years, a total of 13 teams comprising 407 personnel worked with Cambodian refugees. The Medical Cooperation Special Operation Office was established within the Medical Cooperation Department of JICA in 1981, and became a focal point for dispatching JMTs.



1982

The Japan Medical Team for Disaster Relief (JMTDR) is founded

Numerous medical personnel register as volunteers with JICA. Responding to such widespread support, the government developed a system to provide speedier disaster relief in overseas crises, including the dispatch of volunteers, which became known as The Japan Medical Team for Disaster Relief (JMTDR), the predecessor of today's Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) system.



1984

The first mission

The first JMTDR teams are dispatched to Ethiopia to assist some of the millions of desperate peasants facing starvation in one of the worst droughts of the century.

1987

The Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Law is enacted

On September 16, the JDR law was enacted, creating Japan's first comprehensive and officially recognized disaster relief system. These JDR teams, which replaced JMTDR, consist of rescue and medical specialists and other personnel able to respond to various types of overseas crises.

1988-9

Disaster relief goes global

An earthquake in Armenia exposes major flaws in international relief efforts. Based on the lessons from the earthquake, the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), the predecessor of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), became a focal point to better coordinate global assistance in future crises. JICA's Medical Cooperation Special Operation Office was reformed as the Disaster Relief Division, Medical Cooperation Department during this year.



1991

Establishment of JDR Secretariat at JICA. End of direct assistance to refugees

In order to conduct emergency relief operations more effectively and flexibly when dealing with global disasters, JDR establishes an office within JICA as an independent department. A medical team assists Iraqi refugees from the Gulf War who sought safety in Iran and Turkey, but this proves to be the last time such assistance is offered because of a change in the JDR law the following year.



1992

Introduction of the International Peace Cooperation Law (PKO Law) and the revision of the JDR Law

The revision divides responsibilities. The PKO Cabinet Office is now in charge of conflict-oriented catastrophes such as refugee assistance, while JDR retains responsibility for natural or manmade disasters. In addition, units of the Self Defense Force can now be dispatched whenever necessary for major disasters as a JDR team.



2004

Massive disaster affecting a wide area, and seamless assistance

The Great Sumatra Earthquake and Indian Ocean Tsunami was one of the world's worst-ever natural disasters in which at least 240,000 people were killed and millions made homeless. A total of 14 JDR Teams including rescue and medical specialists and Japan Self Defense Force Unit were dispatched to Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The medical activities by JSDF units included the prevention of infectious diseases, thereby linking quick and flexible cooperation by earlier teams with post-disaster recovery assistance afforded by Japan.



2005

The Pakistan earthquake

Following the catastrophic tsunami, a fresh earthquake hits northern Pakistan killing more than 73,000 people. Rescue and medical teams and a Self Defense Force unit are sent to the region, with the medical staff replacing personnel from the Japanese NGO Humanitarian Medical Assistance (HuMA).



2010

Operation in a fragile state and international coordination

A large-scale earthquake occurred directly under the capital of Haiti, causing unprecedented casualties. JDR Medical Team first carried out its mission in what is called a fragile state. Numerous countries and NGOs also surged in, causing JDR to reaffirm the necessity for international coordination, as well as enhanced JDR Medical Team functions, improved mobility, and ensuring safety when operating in a PKO deployment area.

JDR Rescue Team was qualified as a "heavy" team following the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) in March. This means that the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) recognized JDR as having the operational capability for complex technical search and rescue operations in collapsed or failed structures. "Heavy" is the highest level of classification under the IEC system. In 2015, the Rescue Team was again examined for the "heavy team" qualification and recognized as such again.

2011

Operation in a developed nation and the Great East Japan Earthquake

Three batches of JDR Rescue Team were dispatched to Christchurch, New Zealand. This marked the first time ever for JDR operation in a developed nation, as well as dispatching the first batch of JDR personnel aboard a Japanese government airplane. In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan had 24 countries and regions and five international organizations sending more than 1,200 people for search and rescue efforts as well as other advisory activities. Meanwhile, JICA assisted the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team in receiving and coordinating international teams.

2015

Establishment of Infectious Diseases Response Team

In response to the epidemic of Ebola hemorrhagic fever that spread across West Africa in 2014, Infectious Diseases Response Team were set up to provide even more effective assistance in the event of infectious disease outbreak. In July the following year (2016), the first Infectious Diseases Response Team was dispatched for yellow fever outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2016

JDR Medical team verified as Emergency Medical Team by the World Health Organization

JDR Medical Team is verified as Emergency Medical Team (EMT) by World Health Organization (WHO) in October. Following one Chinese team and two Russian teams, JDR Medical Team has become one of the first classified EMT in the world, as the team of Type 1 (Outpatient Emergency Care) and Type 2 (Inpatient Surgical Emergency Care) with Specialist Cell (Hemodialysis and Surgery).

•Table of aid activities 1987-2017

FY	Dispatch of JDR Team	No. of Provision of goods	FY	Dispatch of JDR Team	No. of Provision of goods
1987	Flood in Venezuela; cyclone in Vanuatu	3	2003	SARS in China; earthquake in Algeria; earthquake in Iran; earthquake in Morocco	14
1988	Drought in Ethiopia; flood in Sudan; cyclone in Jamaica; earthquake in the Soviet Union and Armenia	12	2004	Sumatra-Andaman earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean (affecting four countries); earthquake in Indonesia	29
1989	Flood in China; refugee aid in Ivory Coast	7	2005	Earthquake in Pakistan	19
1990	Earthquake in Iran; earthquake in the Philippines; crude oil spill in Saudi Arabia	14	2006	Earthquake in Java, Indonesia; oil spill in the Philippines	15
1991	Cyclone in Bangladesh; Iraqi refugee aid (two countries); typhoon in the Philippines; crude oil spill in the Persian Gulf	19	2007	Oil spill in South Korea	22
1992	Tsunami in Nicaragua; earthquake in Egypt; earthquake in Indonesia	19	2008	Earthquake in western China; cyclone in Myanmar	23
1993	Building collapse in Malaysia; flood in Nepal	18	2009	Typhoon in Taiwan; earthquake off the coast of Padang, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia; earthquake in Haiti; earthquake in Chile	14
1994	Volcanic eruption in Indonesia	14	2010	Flood in Pakistan, volcanic eruption in Indonesia; earthquake in New Zealand	15
1995	Earthquake in Indonesia	16	2011	Factory fire in Russia; flood in Thailand	19
1996	Building collapse in Egypt; cyclone in Bangladesh	24	2012	No dispatch	17
1997	Air pollution in Malaysia; forest fire in Indonesia; crude oil spill in Singapore	19	2013	Typhoon in the Philippines; missing Malaysian aircraft	16
1998	Tsunami in Papua New Guinea; flood in Bangladesh; hurricane in Dominica; hurricane in Nicaragua; hurricane in Honduras; earthquake in Columbia	30	2014	Ebola hemorrhagic fever in West Africa; missing Indonesian aircraft; fire in the Maldives; cyclone in Vanuatu	23
1999	Earthquake in Turkey; earthquake in Taiwan; flood in Mozambique	22	2015	Earthquake in Nepal; smoke haze in Indonesia	10
2000	Earthquake in Indonesia; earthquake in El Salvador; earthquake in India	10	2016	Yellow fever outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	14
2001	No dispatch	9	2017	Garbage Mound Collapse at Disposal Siro in Sri Lanka	2
2002	Volcanic eruption in Papua New Guinea; SARS in Vietnam	22	Total		510

*As of May, 2017

Voices and thanks from disaster areas

“I’ll always treasure those smiles on the children’s faces when we helped them.”

I was on a JDR rescue team for the first time as a doctor during the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster. I was only able to get about two and a half hours of sleep in the first three days because I just worked so feverishly, but for some reason I didn’t feel a bit tired. During the Pakistan earthquake I was part of a medical team, sitting face to face with one victim after another. I will always treasure the smiles on the children’s faces when we helped them. There are so many youngsters in Japan today who don’t know the true value of life and end up committing suicide. But my experience with JDR has shown me the great value of each and every human life. I hope that others out there who want to make a difference in the world will feel moved to join us at JDR.



Michiaki Hata, joined a rescue team as part of the medical unit following the 2004 Asian tsunami in Thailand. Also participated in medical teams responding to the 2005 Pakistan Earthquake and 2010 Haiti Earthquake, and in a rescue team for the 2008 China Earthquake.

“I worked in DR Congo as a member of the Infectious Diseases Response Team.”

In infection control activities, which target living things (pathogenic organisms and people), it is vital to think and act calmly, as it is often the case that there is no telling what will happen next. At the same time, you must also have the analytical skills needed to analyze issues from a broad perspective, rather than just dealing with immediate problems. In this way, providing emergency infection control aid is an extremely difficult and challenging task, but at the same time, it can give you a great sense of fulfillment by feeling the vitality and energy of people while pushing the limits of your own abilities.



Noboru Minakawa, a member of the public health response control group, Infectious Diseases Response Team, JDR, served as Team Leader of the second Infectious Diseases Response Team dispatched to DR Congo in response to the 2016 epidemic of yellow fever.

“It’s important to never give up.”

A Japanese rescue team made up of police officers, fire fighters, and coast guard heard the faint voice of a victim from beneath the rubble, and started working to save him. After 52 hours we managed to pull that young man from the rubble alive. The human will to survive really hit me at that moment, and I remembered how important it is to never give up. If to only provide some peace of mind to the terribly grief-stricken disaster victims, I want to continue working through JDR to let those victims know that they’re not alone, and that they have friends all over the world.



Teiji Hasegawa, a member of the 3rd Regional Coast Guard Headquarters, Japan Coast Guard helped search for survivors following a 2003 earthquake which devastated Algeria.

“I plan to keep giving 100 percent along with my teammates”

After participating in three emergencies I have learned that while the ‘essence’ of nursing care is the same all over the world, because of cultural differences some of Japan’s current medical practices may not be suitable in other parts of the world. So, after we have finished treating disaster victims, it is important to also help them to develop and maintain their own treatment systems. We have begun introductory and intermediate training courses so that the disaster victims themselves will be able to handle future emergencies. Personally, working with JDR has broadened my horizons, given me a valuable experience to grow, and I plan to keep giving 100% along with my teammates.



Eiko Yamada, a JDR registered nurse, was a member of medical teams dispatched to four earthquake disaster zones: off the coast of Padang, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia in 2009; in Pakistan in 2005; in Sri Lanka in 2004; and in Taiwan in 1999. She was also in Palau from 2002 to 2004 with the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (infection control).

“I wish to always stand by victims of disasters”

I have been deployed as part of JDR teams about 20 times since 2000. I’ve seen sadness and cries of victims as well as their strong will to recover from the damages. There always have been smiles of children there too. Other JDR team members and cooperation with other country teams encouraged me during missions when feeling powerless to the harsh environment that we were facing. Above all, those kind words and messages of appreciation from the victims have always stirred me up. I believe people can overcome hardest situations that they would face. I always want to stand by those people going through aftermaths of disasters.



Hitoshi Otomo, JDR Secretariat, being deployed as deputy team leader/logistician 27 times, including the earthquake in Nepal in 2015 (Medical Team), typhoon in the Philippines in 2013 (Medical Team), flood in Thailand in 2011 (Expert Team), earthquake in New Zealand in 2011 (Rescue Team), and flood in Pakistan in 2010 (Medical Team).



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