



JDR/Rescue Team Formation Ceremony (Advance Team)

1 Earthquake & Initial Response

On Monday, February 6, 2023, at approximately 10:17 a.m. (February 6, at approximately 4:17 a.m. TRT), a major earthquake of magnitude 7.8 occurred with its epicenter in Nurdağı, Gaziantep Province, Republic of Turkey. The earthquake caused numerous deaths and injuries, and many buildings collapsed.

Immediately after the earthquake, the FDMA gathered information on the damage, etc., while maintaining close communication and coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (hereinafter referred to as “JICA”). On the day of the earthquake, the Turkish government requested the Japanese government dispatch a search and rescue team, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who has jurisdiction over the International emergency relief teams (hereinafter referred to as “JDR”), consulted with the Commissioner of the FDMA regarding the dispatch of firefighting rescue team members. The Commissioner of the FDMA immediately contacted the mayors of the cities in which the seven fire departments that were in the first order of dispatch on the day in question according to the previously established dispatch plan were in, and after receiving responses from all the mayors that they would accept the request, the decision was made to dispatch the International Rescue Team (hereinafter referred to as “IRT”). Consequently, an IRT, consisting of one FDMA member and 16 members from seven fire departments, was dispatched to Turkey as part of the JDR and Rescue Teams.

• Number of Dispatched IRT Members

- FDMA : 1 -Tokyo Fire Dept. : 6
- Fukuoka City Fire Prevention Bureau : 3
- Hiroshima City Fire Service Bureau : 3
- Ibaraki South-West Regional Fire Dept. : 1
- Tokushima City Fire Dept. : 1
- Joetsu Area Fire Dept. : 1 -Miyazaki City Fire Dept. : 1

2 Airport Gathering & Departure

For this dispatch, the JDR/Rescue team was divided into an advance team (first group) and a main team (second group) in order to enter the disaster area quickly. The advance team departed from Tokyo International Airport (hereinafter referred to as “Haneda Airport”) at 10:50 p.m. on Monday, February 6 for Istanbul, and the main team departed from Haneda Airport at 10:40 p.m. on Tuesday, February 7 for Istanbul.

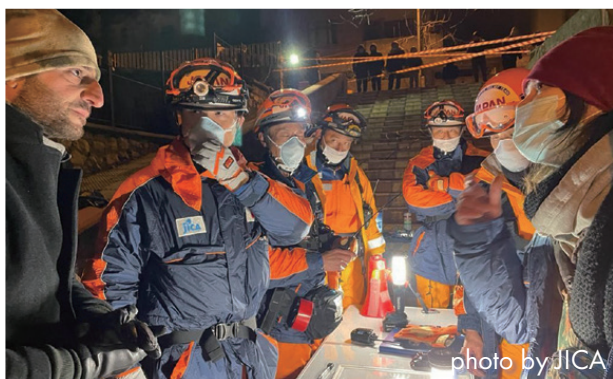
The advance team consisted of 18 members, of which 5 were IRT members (1 from the FDMA and 4 from the Tokyo Fire Department), while the other 12 IRT members left for Turkey with members of the main team.

3 Arrival & Activities On Site

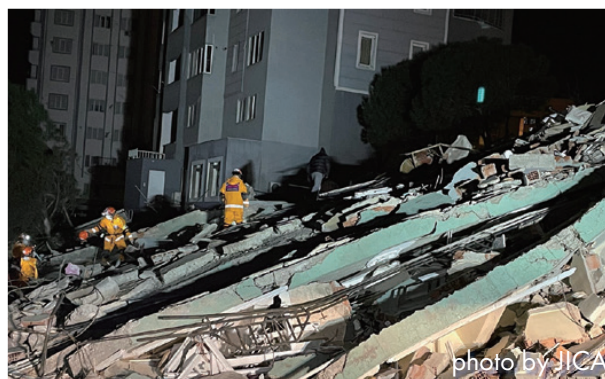
(The times below are in local time. There is a 6 hours time difference from Japan.)

(1) Advance Team

The advance team members arrived at Istanbul International Airport on Tuesday, February 7 at approximately 7:00 a.m. The advance team then changed to a domestic flight and arrived at Kayseri, a city in central Turkey, at around 12:00 p.m. Upon arrival, they immediately visited the Kayseri office of the Turkish Disaster Emergency Agency (AFAD), and based on the information they received there, traveled overland to Kahramanmaraş in southwestern Turkey, near the epicenter of the earthquake. After arriving at Kahramanmaraş on the evening of the 7th, they began search and rescue operations in a collapsed nine-story apartment building at the request of the local authorities. Search and rescue operations here continued until the morning of Wednesday, August 8, when two people in need of rescue were found, but were confirmed dead on the spot by Turkish Ministry of Health officials.



Gathering information from nearby residents



Search and Rescue in Kahramanmaraş



Searching with Dogs



Search and Rescue in Kahramanmaraş

The advance team then gathered information to determine the next location of operations. Upon receiving information that a rescue team was needed at the site of a collapsed four-story apartment building, they immediately rushed to the scene, conducted detailed interviews with the residents, and began search and rescue operations.

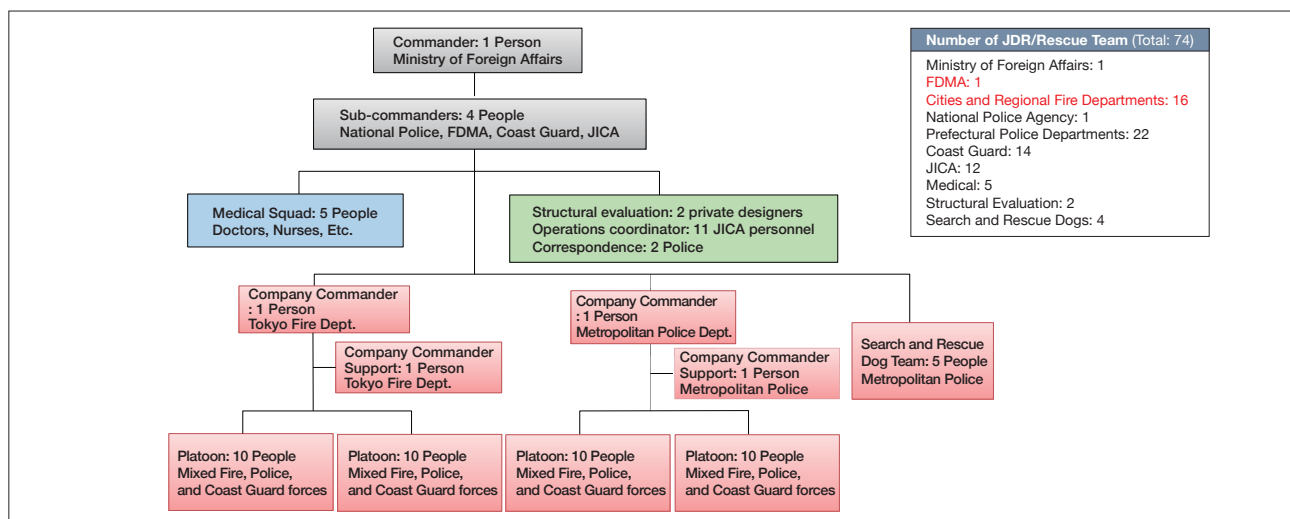
(2) Main Team

The members of the main team arrived at Istanbul International Airport at approximately 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 8.

After taking the same travel route as the advance team, they arrived at Kahramanmaraş at around 8:00 p.m. on the same day. They met up with the advance team and took over the activity sites that had been handled by the advance team.

(3) Advance and Main Teams Joining

Once all members were in place, the JDR/Rescue team moved to a normal formation of two companies and four platoons, working on a company-by-company basis. In addition, the advance team completed the selection of a camp site, which had been conducted in parallel with the search and rescue operations, and made preparations to receive materials, equipment, and supplies. At the suggestion of the JDR/Rescue Team, international coordination using the INSARAG (Established in 1991 for the purpose of international standardization and coordination of urban search and rescue operations. The central office is the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Geneva) methodology (a method in which international rescue teams coordinate



JDR/Rescue Team Organization

on behalf of the governments of the affected countries to determine the search and rescue sites to which they will respond) has also begun within the Kahramanmaraş. The JDR/Rescue team decided to utilize this international coordination while independently touring the affected area to identify activity sites.

In a series of activity sites, JDR/rescue teams searched with radar and other equipment, rescue dogs, and hailing (calling out), etc., then breached the areas that responded with chainsaws and other destructive equipment, and rescued people in need from narrow spaces in cooperation with medical personnel and structural assessment specialists, while being careful of secondary collapses and aftershocks. These search and rescue operations require a high level of skill and knowledge, and each member of the team continued to apply the results of their daily training until Monday, February 13, and rescued six people. Although they encountered situations that required collaboration with local rescue teams and international rescue teams from other countries, as well as conditions that did not allow for sufficient rest even at the campsite due to the extreme cold, the morale of the team members remained high until the end for the sake of the victims in Turkey.

4 Returning Home

After completing their mission in Turkey, the JDR/Rescue Team departed from Istanbul International Airport at 2:50 a.m. on Wednesday, February 15, and arrived at Haneda Airport at 7:20 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15, JST.

At Haneda Airport, the JDR/Rescue Team Disbanding Ceremony was held, followed by the IRT Disbanding Ceremony. At the disbanding ceremony, Counsellor Murakawa of the FDMA read a message from Minister (MIC) Matsumoto and Mr. Yoshida, Secretary General of the National Fire Chiefs' Association, gave a speech.

The FDMA will make use of the valuable lessons learned this time so that IRT dispatch activities can be carried out at a higher level.

Locally, reconstruction efforts have gradually begun. We sincerely pray for the repose of the souls of the victims and the early recovery and restoration of the affected areas, and hope that IRT's activities will provide some encouragement to the victims in their efforts to recover.

Message from Minister Matsumoto for Internal Affairs and Communications at the Disbanding Ceremony for the International Rescue Team

- We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the 17 members of the International Fire and Rescue Team, including Chief Endo and Captain Hayasaka, who were dispatched to the earthquake disaster in the Republic of Turkey.
- Although the search and rescue operations were carried out under extremely harsh conditions such as aftershocks and cold weather, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for their continued and dedicated service immediately after their arrival in the area. Your service has been widely reported in Japan, and I was very encouraged to see it. The Republic of Turkey has also expressed its appreciation for your services, which have been of great significance to Japan's international contribution.
- I am sure that your families and the fire departments from which you were dispatched are very proud of your service, but I am sure that they were also very concerned. I, too, am relieved that all of you have returned home safe and sound.
- I hope that all of you will make use of this experience in your respective workplaces and continue to fulfill the difficult and noble mission of saving lives.
- Thank you very much to all the members of the team.



JDR/Rescue Team Disbanding Ceremony



IRT Group Photo

Material created by the Fire and Disaster Management Agency were translated by the International Fire Service Information Center