

Relief Around the World

Examples of THW missions on behalf of the UN:

- Since 2002: Afghanistan
- 2002 – 2005: Sierra Leone
- 2003: Turkey
- 2003: Congo
- 2004: Chad
- 2004 – 2005: South-East Asia
- 2005: Sudan
- Since 2005: Liberia
- 2005 – 2006: Pakistan



Convinced and Committed

The THW is a partner for people in distress: it is one of the main pillars of protection for the population in Germany, coming to their assistance wherever they are affected by catastrophes or accidents. Around 80,000 volunteers dedicate their free time to the THW.

Mission coordination, training and administration are performed by 850 full-time staff. The THW is a federal authority within the purview of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. In order to deliver a wide range of effective relief measures, it has at its disposal over 8,400 vehicles of various types, as well as boats, motor generator sets, water pumps and other necessary equipment.



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As Of: August 2006

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Rescue, Protection and Security

The THW and the United Nations

Part of the International Relief System

The German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (Technisches Hilfswerk - THW) is a disaster relief organisation of the Federal Republic of Germany and offers its aid and assistance worldwide. These services are increasingly called for by the United Nations (UN) in times of global catastrophes such as floods, tsunamis, earthquakes and international terrorism because the potential of individual nations to cope or offer relief is often too limited. This cooperation means that the THW is an active part of the UN's international relief system.

Constructive and Competent

With its specialised technical units and rapid deployment units for the fields of water supply and emergency search and rescue abroad, the THW can offer practical humanitarian assistance worldwide: national borders are not a limiting factor.

The diverse examples of constructive cooperation between the UN and THW are based on the specialist knowledge of qualified THW staff, which also explains why they work together with many UN committees and departments.



Flexible and Specific Assistance

THW experts work together with the UN at different levels. They are actively contributing to the efforts to optimise international humanitarian assistance in many areas.

Mission Procedures

Since April 2005 the THW has been the chair of the UN's International Search And Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). The THW was also one of the guiding founders of this group in 1991; it has developed guiding principles to improve international missions performed by relief organisations in the wake of large-scale disasters such as earthquakes.

Mission Coordination

Fact-finding missions from the UN, such as the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Teams (UNDAC), include members from the THW. The UNDAC teams coordinate the cooperation between the various relief organisations active in each country of operation. THW volunteers investigate the situation, collect operational information and advise the command posts on site. Two of the seven experts active on Germany's behalf in the UNDAC teams are provided by the THW.



Mission Praxis

Acting on the instructions of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other UN agencies, THW volunteers carry out a wide range of practical assistance. They set up refugee camps, carry out structural repairs on hospitals, service wells and install motor generator sets. They also renovate living accommodation and schools, and run workshops. In addition, upon request the THW sends staff to the United Nations Joint Logistic Centre (UNJLC), which coordinates the logistics for UN missions. The THW also offers logistical support for air-freighting.

Mission Training

UN workers have been coming to Germany since 2001 on a regular basis to attend training courses at the THW training centre. Their training provides them with skills and knowledge relating to leadership, logistics, satellite communication and security in crisis areas. Another aspect is the training provided by the THW abroad to local people – for example, in generator workshops. These training measures lead to professional certification and serve to fulfil the aims of the UN's longer-term development work.