

Mondial Assistance reports on all Asian operations two weeks after the Tsunami

Paris, January 12th, 2005

Two weeks after the Tsunami devastates Asia, Mondial Assistance assesses its interventions.

Within hours after the tidal wave struck Asia on December 26th, Mondial Assistance set up a crisis and co-ordination unit, under the responsibility of the Group's Medical and Operational Directors. The Thai subsidiary was selected as the crisis unit's operational and logistics base.

Three main missions launched :

- On December 26th, Mondial Assistance set up call centres in 8 different countries for several Tour Operators, primarily as a means to centralise information to be able to respond to calls from victims' families and friends. The call centres remained open for approximately ten days, and handled tens of thousands of calls. Although it was difficult during the first few hours following the disaster to give precise answers due to a lack of information, the centres made it possible to help many families, and to facilitate and co-ordinate the procedures they needed to follow with local country authorities.
- On the day of the disaster and during the days that followed, Mondial Assistance doctors participated on site in rescue operations, established contact with the wounded and verified the treatment they received and began to organise repatriations according to the patients' individual conditions.
- Finally, Mondial Assistance organised the repatriation of deceased and identified victims. These repatriations depended on authorisations granted by consular authorities.

Forming intervention teams

The Mondial Assistance team included up to 20 doctors, who were mainly in Thailand where the majority of our clients happened to be when the tidal wave struck. A few of our clients were also in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. In addition to their primary missions, our doctors also provided valuable assistance to their local colleagues. In order to facilitate on site intervention, Mondial Assistance ensured that all members of the team who were sent over to help had the same nationality or spoke the same language as the wounded clients. The intervention team was comprised of French, Germans, Italians, Australians and Singaporeans.

Repatriation operations

Mondial Assistance participated in the immediate repatriation of clients who were uninjured or only slightly injured, returning them to their home countries in emergency chartered planes requested by certain Tour Operators. Mondial Assistance fitted 9 jumbo jets with medical equipment, including doctors and psychologists, to assist and reassure those on board. In some countries, including Switzerland, Mondial Assistance organised for clients who had physically survived the disaster unscathed but had lost everything, to be met at the airport and accompanied to their places of residence.

In total, Mondial Assistance organised 120 repatriations for seriously wounded clients of 11 different countries¹. To reduce travel time for the wounded and due to the disparity of the final return destinations, Mondial Assistance decided to use regular, direct airline flights, accompanied by logistical, medical and psychological support. The transfers were organised according to the particular health condition and home country of each client. Some of the wounded preferred delaying their return home to assist another family member who was also wounded, or to help look for people who were missing or to identify a body. In every single case, Mondial Assistance respected and assumed all victim requests.

The remains of 10 identified victims will be repatriated as soon as the consular authorities grant permission.

The situation on January 12th

Among Mondial Assistance's customers, four remain in serious condition (2 Canadians and 2 Germans) and cannot yet be moved or repatriated. Our on-site teams are providing them with medical care and they will be brought home just as soon as their conditions allow.

Finally, among those who are missing or have not yet been identified, there are probably 400 – 500 Mondial Assistance customers who will receive burial services on site, or for whom repatriations will be carried out by the military authorities of their countries of citizenship.

Costs

In total, the operation will cost 7 million Euros. This cost will not affect the company's accounts or the price of future premiums.

What have we learned ?

By definition, it is impossible to foresee in detail the extent of such a catastrophe. However, the emergency plan Mondial Assistance designed to deal with a crisis of this scope, made it possible to quickly organise search, rescue and emergency aid operations on site in the shortest possible delays. The co-ordination carried out between the Paris-based crisis unit, the Group's Thai subsidiary and the teams quickly dispatched to the afflicted area, also enabled optimising actions and maximising the use of human and material resources. As a result, we were able to carry out repatriations relatively quickly, considering the means of available transportation, the conditions of our wounded customers and the actual situation on hand.

« In facing a catastrophe of this size, we pay homage to the many victims and encourage and support the countries which must now rebuild everything that was destroyed. We also honour the extraordinary work carried out by the local hospitals and doctors, who knew how to respond to the huge surge of wounded victims in a context of indescribable chaos, and provide them with very good quality care. Finally, I want to thank the Mondial Assistance teams who once again demonstrated their professionalism and tremendous humanism in intervening with great efficiency in such humanly distressing conditions, » declared Alain Demissy, Chairman of Mondial Assistance Group.

A meeting of all Mondial Assistance Medical and Operational Directors will take place in Paris on January 26th to share acquired experiences and evaluate practical lessons learned from this disastrous event.

¹ 120 wounded people, including 36 repatriated to Germany, 22 to France, 17 to Italy, 15 to Belgium, 6 to Canada, 5 to Australia, 5 to Austria, 4 to the United States, 4 to Switzerland, 3 to the Czech Republic and 3 to the U.K.

Main events of the assistance operations

Sunday, December 26th, 2004

6h35 a.m. (Paris time)

The operational platform of Mondial Assistance AUSTRALIA contacts the Group's top management at Paris headquarters on the « red » telephone line reserved for catastrophes; an earthquake, followed by a tidal wave, have hit Asia.

Operational teams closest to the damaged areas are mobilised immediately, as dictated by the Group's "crisis" plan designed to manage catastrophes.

6H53 a.m. (Paris time)

The operational platform in BANGKOK (THAILAND) is on alert and confirms that the Tsunami has struck the southern part of the country. As also dictated by the plan, teams of doctors, nurses and logistics experts from Mondial Assistance Thailand are responsible for assessing the situation and the means available.

7H50 a.m. (Paris time)

An analysis of the Group's hospital database makes it possible to evaluate the capacity of hospitals and medical structures in Southern Thailand and BANGKOK to care for victims.

BANGKOK teams confirm that the hospitals are still operational.

An evaluation of evacuation possibilities guarantees that the BANGKOK Airport is fully functioning ; investigations are carried out to verify that the PHUKET Airport is also operational.

Mondial Assistance THAILAND medical teams leave BANGKOK for PHUKET.

Telephone communication problems remain in the region damaged by the tsunami.

12h00 (Paris time)

The Group's operational platforms in each country assume responsibility for their customers and patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A crisis unit is set up in Paris, and put in charge of co-ordinating all necessary means and supervising the different intervention operations.

This crisis unit will be in permanent contact with the unit based in BANGKOK.

From this day onward until the end of our crisis intervention, each operational platform in the 14 countries where our wounded customers originate, communicate full daily reports to the crisis unit via the Internet.

13h40 (Paris time)

Mondial Assistance sets up telephone hotlines for Tour Operator accounts in 8 countries.

The hotlines receive and treat several tens of thousands of calls over the next 10 days.

Monday, December 27th

7h00 a.m. (Paris time)

The crisis unit carries out a full report.

The situation has taken on huge proportions and is declared a major catastrophe; our patients are in three countries: the MALDIVES, SRI LANKA, and THAILAND; the Group's operational platforms receive numerous calls from victims' families.

In collaboration with a Tour Operator partner, medical teams from Elvia France board an Airbus for MALE in the MALDIVES. Doctors, nurses and psychologists accompany 160 French tourists during their repatriation to France ; this specially chartered flight lands in PARIS on Tuesday morning.

In the days that follow, 9 other planes similar to the Airbus will be medically equipped to take victims of this disaster back home.

Afternoon

The number of wounded increases rapidly.

At this stage, Mondial Assistance Group is caring for more than 40 victims of 10 different nationalities in THAILAND. Most of these victims are located in PHUKET, in the southern part of the country. The crisis unit decides to reinforce the operational team and sends additional specialised teams and medical equipment : a doctor and nurse based in SINGAPORE leave for BANGKOK ; an Italian doctor and two Austrian doctors also leave their respective countries for THAILAND; and a logistics expert specialising in managing catastrophes, leaves PEKING for BANGKOK.

All of these Mondial Assistance teams will be deployed in damage stricken PHUKET.

Mondial Assistance AUSTRALIA counts 8 wounded among its victims and organises an emergency medical plane to evacuate them to SYDNEY.

Tuesday, December 28th

The number of wounded and missing persons continues to climb. Our patients in SRI LANKA and the MALDIVES are all repatriated or about to be, but wounded customers in THAILAND total more than 60.

The care administered on site is adapted to each patient's particular condition ; numerous patients have lost a loved one and refuse to be repatriated before they have found one or all of their missing friends or family members.

Our teams from SINGAPOUR, ITALY and GERMANY arrive near PHUKET, and visit our hospitalised patients in liaison with our Thai subsidiary's medical teams which are already there.

These teams are in contact with foreign ambassadors and the Thai government, with the aim to take care of the victims and facilitate search and rescue operations as well as identify the deceased.

The medical aircraft, organised by Mondial Assistance AUSTRALIA, takes aboard the Australian victims and heads for SYDNEY.

Wednesday, December 29th

The number of patients assumed by Mondial Assistance increases as new customers continue to contact us. Most of them are German.

The crisis unit confirms its decision to use regular, direct airline flights to Europe to evacuate Mondial Assistance customers. BANGKOK has a major airport, one of the largest in Asia, serviced from Europe by large jets including Boeing 747s and 777s and Airbus A330s and A340s.

When our patient's health allows, we repatriate each customer on one of these fast, direct, regular flights. Customers either have seats on-board or lie on stretchers. They are flown to Prague, Warsaw, London, Brussels, Milan, Munich, Frankfurt or Paris where our local teams meet them and direct them to hospitals.

From now on the telephone functions in the best conditions.

Mondial Assistance AUSTRALIA's emergency medical plane lands in SYDNEY.

A team of 10 German doctors leaves MUNICH for PHUKET.

On the evening of December 29th, more than 60 seriously wounded are being taken care of ; Mondial Assistance is providing assistance to over 90 people.

Thursday, December 30th

The airborne operations orchestrated by the crisis unit continue between Europe and BANGKOK. Medical teams remain close to patients who cannot be repatriated immediately.

The crisis unit counts nearly 100 wounded.

The consular authorities of concerned countries signal several missing persons. Considering the local situation, different governments provide the means, and the Thai army is mobilised to find the missing victims.

Friday, December 31st

When Asia moves into the new year 2005, only 14 wounded persons are still hospitalised in THAILAND.

The doctors who have flown in to help care for the patients still on site, also help local hospitals care for the surge of victims and repatriate patients to their countries of origin.

Saturday, January 1st, Sunday January 2nd and Monday, January 3rd

The crisis unit continues its work; in BANGKOK, the teams replace one another and only 5 wounded victims remain, waiting for their health to improve before they are repatriated.

The crisis unit's final report is as follows: several hundred « slightly » wounded victims were repatriated and returned to their homes; 120 seriously wounded were repatriated on medically equipped emergency aircraft.

Despite efforts by local authorities, very few missing persons were found.

Tuesday January 4th through Sunday January 9th

The crisis operation is maintained, even though the patients are taken care of by the normal medical assistance conditions and teams.

Monday, January 10th

The crisis unit is closed.

About Mondial Assistance Group

World leader in assistance, travel insurance and customer services, today Mondial Assistance Group counts more than 7 500 staff members who speak 40 different languages and work throughout the world with a network of 240 correspondents and 400 000 service providers. Present on all five continents in 28 countries, the Group primarily operates under its three international brands : ELVIA, Mondial Assistance and World Access. Mondial Assistance Group is equally owned by AGF and RAS International, both subsidiaries of the Allianz Group.
www.Mondial-Assistance-Group.com

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