The Armenia Earthquake: Grinding out Effective Disaster Response in Colombia's Coffee Region

Grinding Out an Effective Disaster Response in Colombia's Coffee Region

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The Earthquake

- Located in the mountains of Los Andes, Armenia is the capital of Quindío, Colombia.
- The seismic with its epicenter 17kms south of Armenia, killed 1,186 people.
- 20,632 buildings were totally destroyed.
- Armenia was very well prepared for disasters, however, the earthquake destroyed most of police and fire stations, killing many officers in the stations.

THE RELIEF CHAIN

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1. Planning & Preparedness
   - National Disaster system setup in 2019.
   - It was organized via local, regional, and national committees.
   - Advantage Colombia had in reacting to disaster is its experience with the war on drugs.
   - Following an evaluation of the damage to public buildings, the Unified Command Post was established in Quindío, Colombia.

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The End

Questions?
Disaster Response in Colombia
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Assessment

- Red Cross estimated the initial impact using normative and operative rescue manual similar to a checklist. Caseism.com
- Operatives produced a diagnostic of the situation and broadly determined the scale of the disaster after gathering info from the radio, the press, and ground.
- Establishment of shelters was crucial to the operation and decided to use the exhibition center CENEXPO.
Resource Mobilization

- Financial: Public money spent during the first 3 days came from the National Fund for Calamities, the Social Solidarity Network and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute.

- Human Resources: Massive camps were setup to aid the city. Cuba, Mexico, France, the U.S, Belgium & Russia volunteered. Many of these countries brought excavators and machinery to help stabilize the city.
Organizational Set-Up

- President Pastrana delegated military command to General Cortes, commander of the Army's Third Division. 300 men were added as reinforcement to the 2,000 troops already station in order to replace troops that became exhausted.
- The Red Cross assigned an administrative employee to manage money and personnel.
- A logistics coordinator was assigned to cover transportation, supply, and warehouse management. Caseism.com
Procurement & Donations

- Colombians delivered donations to reception points in the main cities. Public and private organizations provided large quantities of goods and transportation services.
- University of Antioquia checked the quality of food, medication and water. Several tons of rice was declared unfit for human consumption and bury by the government.
- Food was procured from all local supermarkets as well as wholesalers that were not affected.

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Tracking & Tracing

- Shipments were tracked manually using notebooks or with improvised excel sheets.
- Paper forms were used to register aid shipments in Bogota and several other Colombian cities, and to register items received in Armenia.
- The situation within the Red Cross allowed them to track an item until it reached its victims.

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