



# POST-DISASTER MANAGEMENT

## MADRID AIR CRASH - AUGUST 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008



Dirección General de Emergencias y Protección Civil  
Subdirección General SAMUR - Protección Civil



## BACKGROUND



- Flight JK 5022 was on a codeshare with Lufthansa, flight LH 2554 from Madrid to Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
- The plane crashed and broke apart after failing to lift off from runway No 6 at the Barajas airport at 14:23 local time.
- Madrid-112 Dispatch Center received a call from a witness of the crash at 14:27
- 112- Dispatch Center transferred the information to SAMUR-Protección Civil
- SAMUR-PC confirmed the accident with Madrid Air Route Traffic Control Center



- **MCI Protocol was activated immediately after the confirmation of the accident**

- **Operational Resources : 180 Professionals, 364 Volunteers**

**67 emergency vehicles of SAMUR-PC arrived to the scene**

- **20 people were rescued alive and transferred to the hospital**

- **154 people were killed in the accident**





SEVENTH FRAMEWORK  
PROGRAMME

**All the alive victims were  
transferred to the hospital  
at 16:15**



**Then, the recovery of the dead  
bodies begun**





# IMMEDIATE MEDICAL TRANSFER VICTIMS

# PROCEEDING ASSISTANCE OF THE

# AFTER AND INJURED



- Recovery of the dead bodies by firefighters and medical first responders coordinartes by Fire Department and SAMUR-PC responsables

- Judicial authority on the scene, pointed an area next to the crash point to bring the corpses togheter





# IMMEDIATE MEDICAL TRANSFER VICTIMS

# PROCEEDING ASSISTANCE OF THE

# AFTER AND INJURED



- Forensic scientists and Judicial Police members on the scene
- 65 members of SAMUR-PC staff collaborated in the search and rescue of the bodies as requested by Judicial Authority
- Rescue and recovery of the bodies lasted 5 hours





## SCIENTIST POLICE TASK ON THE SCENE



- Search of the surrounding area looking for small human remains and personal belongings
- 65 members of SAMUR-PC staff collaborated in the search of human remains and personal belongings as requested by Scientist Police
- Search and recovery of human remains and personal belongings lasted more than 1 hour





- The transfer of the corpses to a fairground already used as a temporary morgue after the terrorist attack of march 11, 2004 began to be organized 30 minutes after the accident (IFEMA)
- The transfer of the corpses from the scene to the fairground started around 20:00 h





**Security General Coordinator of Madrid  
City Council appointed SAMUR-PC  
responsible for organize the**



## **“ FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS CENTER”**



*Some confused families went to the Airport looking for information.  
A group of psychologists were sent to the Airport in order to give  
psychological support and reorient them*





# “FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS CENTER”



1. General coordination room
2. Reception room for volunteer Mental Health professionals and clergy members of several denominations





**3. Reception room for victims' relatives where a form was filled out with the number of casualties in the family, contact data, essential needs (food, clothing, shelter, etc)**

*A psychologist was assigned to each family for companion and support since the beginning of the process*

**Relatives of 117 victims were registered at 21:00**

**4. Infirmary to meet medical needs**

**5. Reception room for foreign embassies personnel**



**6. Four rooms were fitted out as a forensic processing center to take biological samples from the bodies**

**7. One room to communicate the family the data about the DNA testing process and results**

*In some cases, it was necessary to ask the family to bring in personal belongings that helped to firm up a successful DNA match*

**8. Two rooms for individual psychological support**



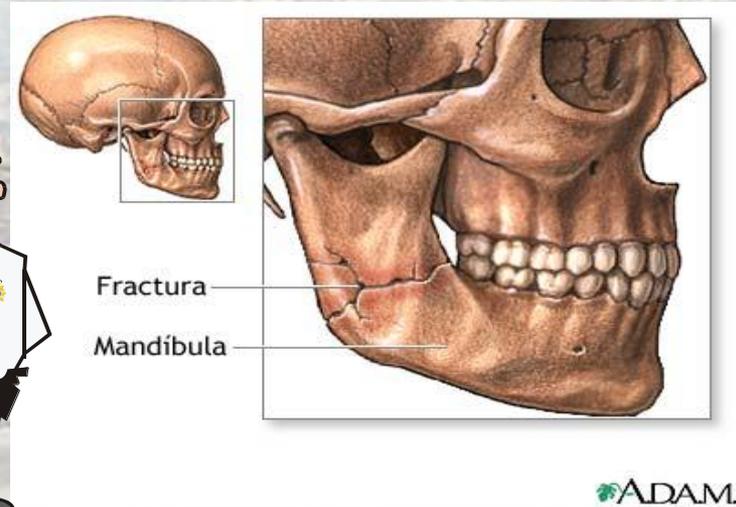
## VICTIMS IDENTIFICATION PROCESS



- **Police Forensic Services reported to SAMUR-PC the identification of a victim**
- **The family of the victim was then contacted to inform them that an identification has been made**
- **The information was given by the SAMUR-PC manager in charge always in the presence of the psychologist**
- **A SAMUR staff member went with the family to the morgue to identify the body**
- **Funeral arrangements assistance**



- August 20<sup>th</sup> at 23:00 the first victim was identified
- During the following 24 hours the victims identification process was carried out in IFEMA
- The first 50 victims were identified





# TRANSFER OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICE AND THE FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS CENTER”



• August 21<sup>th</sup> at 23:00 operation at IFEMA fairground was over and transferred to 2 different locations:

• **HOTEL AUDITORIUM**, provided by the Air Carrier

• Families accommodation

• General coordination office

• Medical room

• Mental health services

• A volunteer employee from the Airline

is assigned to each family to escort and logistical support





- **LA ALMUDENA CEMETERY**
- **Morgue**
- **Medical Examiner Office**
- **Mental Health Services**





# PROCEEDING BETWEEN LA ALMUDENA CEMETERY AND HOTEL AUDITORIUM



- Forensic Officer reported by phone to the responsible for the general coordination office the identification of a victim
- The responsible for the general coordination office at the hotel set up an individual interview to notify family members of positive identification
- Local Police agents and airline escort drove the family from the hotel to the cemetery





## PROCEEDING AT LA ALMUDENA CEMETERY



- **Judicial arrangements for the disposal of human remains**
- **Funeral arrangements**
- **Possibility of seeing human remains**
- **Possibility of going to the Airport to recognize personal belongings and keep them**
- **Transfer back to the hotel**

*All these procedures were done in the presence of a psychologist providing companion and support to the victims' family*



## CONCLUSIONS



- The model outlined in this presentation could be transferable to other type of natural disaster and similiar critical incidents
- The effectiveness of a protocol to manage this type of incidents has been proved
- It is also very important to have a clear concept of who is in charge of the family assistance and support operations center”



## LESSONS LEARNED



- Team members need to be rotated to allow time away from the work site in order to avoid stress reactions
- Psychological support is necessary during all the process but space for intimacy should be respected
- Institutions with competence in Human Support (social services, mental health services, etc) should get involved





## LESSONS LEARNED



**All personnel involved in providing services to assist the victims' family should be trained in crisis response and must demonstrate compassion, sympathy, technical expertise and professionalism to manage the ethical issues, common in this type of situations.**



*Ethics is an endeavor. It refers to ways of understanding what is good and right in human experience. It is about discernment, knowledge and self-reflection. It is the concrete expression of moral ideals in everyday life. Ethics is about meaning, and it is about action. (LW Roberts)*



**Thank You**

