

PALANG MERAH INDONESIA

(INDONESIAN RED CROSS - PMI PAPUA PROVINCE)

OUR SELECTED EXPERIENCE

PRACTICAL RESOURCE PACK

Our context

The Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI) Papua office, established in 1963, is one of 33 PMI offices at provincial level. Nowadays, the PMI Papua office has 16 branches in 34 districts. Papua is the largest province in Indonesia. In 1963, Papua province was integrated into Indonesia. Portions of the province, in particular the center highland, is prone to insecurity, inherited from past conflict.

This situation has impact on the general development of the areas. The general public has difficulty to access health services and education, as health and education personnel often leave the area due to insecurity. As one of the local humanitarian actors in Papua, PMI Papua province has been providing various services to the general population of Papua, including blood donations,

medical transport, community-based health services and assistance response to emergencies. Since 2006, together with the ICRC and Dian Harapan Hospital, PMI Papua has been implementing cataract surgery and distribution of spectacles to the general population of the center highland areas. Furthermore PMI is providing transport of sick people from their home to the nearest medical facility by ambulance.

How our acceptance, security and access were affected

Tensions still occur every now and then between the alleged separatist group and the authorities. There are many check points in the center highlands of Papua by both the authorities and those who are gatekeepers to



PMI and ICRC distributing spectacles and offering cataract surgery in the center highland areas of Papua.

Credit: ICRC

certain areas. During heightened situation of tension, the authorities insist that PMI teams shall be escorted by the police or the military. As PMI we always managed to decline such orders

Although from time to time PMI faces difficulties, they are known as a neutral organization. Most of the time both authorities and gatekeepers give PMI access to provide humanitarian assistance.



In the central highland areas of Papua PMI has an agreement with the local government health office on the provision of health services. The local government providing the vehicle and equipment needed for the services, while PMI provides the human resources and the expertise to run the services. The PMI branch has no ambulance of its own.

In 2013 shootings occurred in this area. The separatist group accused the government of attacking their people. In the weeks after the shootings PMI received a request from the military to evacuate a sick person from a village to the nearest health service. Three PMI personnel went to the village. On their way back, the ambulance was shot at. Two PMI volunteers were badly injured, one volunteer died.

As PMI used the health office ambulance, the vehicle attacked was not marked with the PMI logo. Furthermore the military is using ambulances similar to the health office's ambulance. At a later stage, the allegedly separatist group sent a letter of apology to PMI. In the letter it was stated that they did not know that it was the PMI vehicle and the attack was a counter to the shooting to them by the authorities.

What we did and learned

We coordinate with our PMI headquarters to provide assistance for the wounded volunteers. Although during the particular event the three volunteers were not insured, PMI NHQ has provided funds to support the recovery of the injured volunteers and to the family of the dead.

Context and risk assessment

- We must review our preparation stages when deploying our team in particular when working in insecure areas. Proper situation and context analysis of security is now part of our preparation.

Acceptance of the organisation

- In certain areas that are considered prone to insecurity, stakeholders and gatekeeper mapping is highly important. This will enable us to conduct targeted dissemination sessions related to all key stakeholders and gatekeeper in the area.

Identification

- We learned the use of consistent and visible display of the PMI logo on vehicles and volunteer uniforms is necessary at all times to be properly visible and reduce risk.
- After the incident it was decided that where PMI needs to use an ambulance of the health office, the PMI must ensure that the ambulance is identified by the PMI logo, ensuring that it can be recognized from the distance and that the Health Office logo is being covered.



Credit: Derek Windessy
PMI logo on a non-PMI vehicle used for operations.

External communication and coordination

- External coordination with related stakeholders in our services area is highly important (including with local government, military, police, religious leaders and community leaders).
- Conducting dissemination sessions, including to share and inform about PMI activities.

Operational security risk management

- PMI in Papua strives to ensure that the SOP for working in sensitive and insecure situation as well as security guidelines are well understood by all of their personnel.