



NEWS RELEASE

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Singapore contingent returns from Christchurch

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Singapore and Malaysian navies conduct bilateral maritime exercise



Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant-General Neo Kian Hong speaking to the SAF team at the reception.

The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) team which was deployed to assist with the earthquake relief operations in Christchurch, New Zealand, returned home this evening after successfully completing their mission. 70 SAF personnel, together with 30 members from the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) urban search and rescue team, were welcomed home by Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant-General (LG) Neo Kian Hong at a ceremony held at Changi Airport Terminal 3. Also present at the ceremony were Senior Minister of State for Law and Home Affairs Associate Professor Ho Peng Kee, family members of the returning personnel as well as senior SAF and SCDF officers.

Speaking to the SAF team at the reception, LG Neo said, "I congratulate you for successfully completing your mission. You have demonstrated professionalism and commitment in the disaster relief effort to help the people of Christchurch. I thank you and your families who have supported you throughout this deployment."

The 116-strong team began assisting the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and local authorities with rescue operations and providing humanitarian aid to victims of the earthquake in Christchurch on 23 Feb 2011. During their 17-day deployment at Christchurch, the SAF personnel worked closely with the NZDF in conducting cordon operations in the city centre to ensure the safety and security of the residents whose lives and homes were affected by the earthquake. They were also deployed to remove debris in the suburbs, set up water purification units and tents, and provide primary healthcare at the welfare centres. Besides the SAF team, two RSAF C-130s and one KC-135 military aircraft also evacuated civilians, and airlift humanitarian aid and supplies to victims of the earthquake. The aircraft have since returned to Singapore.

The remaining SAF personnel will return to Singapore tomorrow. They will be received by Chief of Army Major-General Chan Chun Sing, senior SAF officers and family members. In Christchurch, the SAF-led Disaster Victim Identification team continues to assist local authorities in forensics work to identify victims killed in the earthquake.



CPL Muhammad Hasif being welcomed home by his family members.

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