

Hytera Provides Swift Response to Aid Laos Dam Collapse Rescue

User
BSR (Blue Sky Rescue)

Market segment
NGO

Project time
2018

Products
DS 6210 trunking cluster system
PD788 hand portable radio



Introduction >>

The collapse of a hydroelectric power station dam in southeastern Laos during construction caused widespread damage and triggered a major humanitarian crisis. Hytera was able to help the relief effort by quickly providing professional mobile radio (PMR) equipment to enable the rescue organisations to coordinate their response.

Background >>

The Saddle Dam D was part of a larger hydroelectric power project involving the construction of two main and five auxiliary dams in Champasak Province in south east Laos. The earth-filled auxiliary dam was nearing completion and was due to become operational in 2019.

The dam collapsed at around 8pm on 23 July 2018 causing immediate flash flooding in nearby villages and sweeping away buildings, roads and bridges. Large numbers of people were affected by the devastation in both Champasak and the neighbouring province of Attapeu.

Rescue efforts were hampered by dense forests and continuing bad weather with heavy rains. With roads washed away the only way into the affected areas was by helicopter or flat-bottomed boats. The area also had no mobile phone coverage, which made it difficult to contact people and get a clear idea of how many people had died or were missing. By 23 September, 40 people were confirmed dead, at least 98 more were missing, possibly as many as 1,100 people, and another 6,600 others were displaced from their homes.

The challenge >>

The main challenge was to be able to reach the stricken survivors and evacuate everyone to a safer area where they could be provided with medical aid, food and shelter. Good radio communications were going to be a vital part of the humanitarian relief effort. A number of civilian voluntary organisations who were planning to go to Laos contacted Hytera to ask for professional mobile radio (PMR) support, including Blue Sky Rescue (BSR), China's largest non-profit civil rescue organisation.





Hytera reacted immediately and quickly developed an emergency communication plan to help the aid agencies. By midnight of 26 July Hytera's Laos branch office together with local distributors had assembled some radio communications equipment. Hytera local technical engineers from the overseas customer service department were put on 24-hour standby so they could provide support and advice as soon as it was needed.

The next day (27 July), Hytera received a message from BSR that its command center could not contact its rescue team with the communications equipment they already had, because the radio frequency signals were too weak. The BSR command center was worried about the safety of the rescue team due to the complex environment and harsh conditions they were having to operate in. The command center therefore hoped Hytera could come up with a solution to overcome the communication problems on the ground as quickly as possible.

The solution >>

Once they had got hold of the details of BSR's communication requirements, the Hytera technical team set to work to customise an emergency communications solution to meet the needs of the rescuers on the ground in the disaster area.

The solution included a Hytera DMR DS 6210 trunking cluster system, which comprises a base station, subscribers, bearer network and mobile switching office (MSO). Hytera also donated DMR PD788 hand portable radios featuring a display screen and full keypad. The radio equipment was then transported to the disaster area as quickly as possible.

The result >>

Once the DMR DS 6210 cluster system was installed on the ground the Hytera Laos customer service engineers quickly activated the radio system for use by the emergency response agencies. The coverage provided by the DMR radio system proved more than equal to the communication demands made on it by the search and rescue teams.

The PD788 radios provided clear, high-definition voice communications enabling an efficient coordination of the rescue effort. In addition to its wide area coverage, the DMR DS6210 provided a dispatch function with a rich array of features and a helpful visual display.

For example, the GPS function built into the radios meant the command and control center could see precisely where the rescue team members were in real time on a map. This made it much easier to coordinate the rescue effort, as the command centre did not have to rely on purely verbal descriptions over the radio to try and pinpoint where team members were located.

Hytera, a leading global provider of innovative Professional Mobile Radio (PMR) communications solutions, knows the importance and irreplaceable role of PMR communications in emergency rescue situations.

Over the past few years, Hytera has supported BSR in several rescues such as the Nepal earthquake, the Myanmar flood, and the Guangming landslide. The company also provides training for BSR volunteers. Hytera will continue to support disaster relief efforts around the world and will provide help immediately after any disaster.



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