

Volunteers give vital quake support

Civil groups are becoming increasingly important in rescue operations, reports **An Baijie** in Ludian county, Yunnan province.

Cheng Kun's shouts broke the lull of the hot afternoon in Ludian county. "He is opening his eyes! Quick, move him to a cooler spot under the shade!"

The soldiers quickly mobilized upon hearing the commands.

They carried the patient, who had fallen into a coma after suffering from heatstroke, to the spot. The rescuers gave the man first aid, following the instructions of Cheng carefully.

But Cheng is no military commander. He is a doctor at the Qingdao branch of Qilu Hospital and a member of the Blue Sky rescue team, a volunteer group under the Red Cross Society of China.

The doctor had just helped save another victim of the magnitude-6.5 quake that hit Ludian county in Yunnan province on Aug 3. At least 617 people have died and 112 others are missing after China's deadliest tremor since 2010.

The man who had fallen into a coma, Zhou Yingjiang, was in a hurry to return home after hearing that his house had collapsed in the quake. He fell into a coma after walking hours in the sun.

Zhou regained consciousness about half an hour after the rescuers treated him.

"Thanks for your excellent medical treatment. Without your help, I might have already died," he told Cheng.

When the quake hit, Cheng was on his honeymoon with his wife in neighboring Sichuan province. Hearing of the large number of casualties, the doctor ended his vacation and arrived at the quake zone with the Red Cross Society's Qingdao branch on the second day after the disaster. His wife followed him to volunteer in the rescue operations.

"I am a professional doctor and I believe my expertise can be helpful. I came here to save as many lives as possible," Cheng said.

Cheng was among the 240 Blue Sky members who volunteered in the quake zone.

Recognizing the crucial work that people



A volunteer with the Blue Sky rescue team delivers supplies to the quake zone on Aug 7, four days after the magnitude-6.5 earthquake hit Ludian county of Yunnan province.

RAN WEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

like Cheng do, local authorities have given them top priority in the rescue operations.

At an emergency conference, Yunnan's vice-governor Yin Jianye said that all rescue forces, including the military, should not hinder the work of such professional rescue teams.

"Our top priority is to save lives buried under the debris. All military forces should help the rescuers with expertise," Yin said on the night of Aug 4, the second day after the quake.

Advanced team

Zhang Yong, who heads the Blue Sky team, arrived in the quake zone on Aug 4. Zhang said that as one of China's most advanced rescue teams, Blue Sky members usually choose the "blind areas" that other rescue forces can neglect.

"At the initial stages after a quake hits, military forces and volunteers always swarm to

the epicenter. But many remote mountainous areas can also suffer heavy damage," he told China Daily.

The Blue Sky team is divided into small squads to ensure that as many locations as possible are covered, especially in regions that are far from the epicenter but also located on the seismic fault lines.

All Blue Sky members receive professional training on rescue work and they also attend rescue work courses at least once a week, he said.

"Civil rescue teams like Blue Sky are a crucial supplement to government and military forces."

"With professional equipment, we can reach remote areas quickly to help residents in the devastated spots in time," he said.

Chinese civil rescue forces came into the global spotlight during the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, when the spontaneous mobiliza-

tion of numerous volunteers impressed the rest of the world. Six years later, the country's social network has vastly expanded to help in another impressive round of disaster relief.

As of Aug 6, about 70 domestic non-governmental organizations have dispatched rescue teams to the quake-hit zone in Ludian county, according to statistics released by the Ludian county commission of the Communist League of China.

Groups like the Water Safety Program of China also lobby for aid online to help equip disaster victims with basic water purifiers, according to the program's chief Chen Lisha.

Government-backed foundations fund some NGOs in the quake zone. The China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation has provided funds to Blue Sky to help cover its transportation, gasoline, and accommodations.

Zhang Yong said that China's civil rescue forces have certainly been more professional

in rescue operations for the Ludian quake.

"The coordination between the government and NGOs has become smoother in dealing with natural disasters," he said, adding that a communication platform is important for distributing resources at the quake zone.

To that effect, about 20 of the NGOs involved jointly established an online platform on Aug 4 to share information.

Through the platform, the NGOs have reached a consensus for professional rescuers to be given priority in accessing the quake zone, with all other volunteers asked to clear the way for them.

Hao Nan, leader of the Zhuoming Emergency Information Center, said that the goal of civil groups is to assist the government and help in areas where it cannot handle rescue work on its own.

Hao's NGO collects and verifies online information on both survivors and rescuers, before guiding rescuers via the popular WeChat and QQ chat platforms.

He said that if inexperienced volunteers enter the quake zone, they could hinder rescue work due to their lack of knowledge and expertise.

On Aug 4, Yunnan's civil affairs department also called on the volunteers not to swarm the quake zone as rescue vehicles had already blocked the crucial road accessing the area.

Individual efforts

Apart from professional rescue teams, many individual volunteers have also been active in the rescue work.

Adil Memettur, a young member of the Uygur ethnic group, arrived at the quake zone with 1,400 boxes of the traditional cake of his ethnic group after traveling 1,200 kilometers from Hunan province.

"The Xinjiang nut cake is nutritious and easily preserved. It is also Muslim food that suits the ethnic groups in Yunnan," he said, adding that his 5,000 kilograms of cake can feed 50,000 people for a day.

Adil, 24, who has just graduated from Changsha University of Science and Technology in Hunan, became a popular figure in the country for his online store selling the Xinjiang snack "qiegao," also called "marentang," a kind of dense nougat made from nuts, candied fruit and malt syrup.

Contact the writer at anbaijie@chinadaily.com.cn

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Chengdu bucks downward trend as multinationals thrive

By LI YU and PENG CHAO

Sichuan's capital Chengdu has been winning favor among the foreign investment community even amid a gloomy global economy and downward pressure nationwide.

A leading multinational medical device provider from the US, Medtronic Inc, is a recent arrival in the Chengdu High-Tech Zone, where it established a development and global manufacturing base for its hemodialysis system on Aug 4.

Its production line is expected to begin operation in 2016 making products and key parts to serve markets in China and around the world, said Omar Ishrak, chairman and CEO of the company.

The Chengdu facility also marked a milestone for Medtronic's development in China following its Shanghai Innovation Center that opened two years ago, Ishrak said.

"Chengdu is our best choice because it is the most dynamic region in central and western China, and a great number of Fortune Global 500 companies have established development and manufacturing facilities here," he said.

Chengdu is home to a number of universities and research institutes that provide a large talent pool in electronic engineering, material chemistry and medical treatment.

As well "the efficient and pragmatic government service is one of the main factors that Medtronic chooses Chengdu", he said.

Global logistics giant DHL also places a high value on Chengdu as an emerging market and investment focus in China.

DHL has based its finance shared service center in

95
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Chengdu and established an operation center in the city in 2012.

Wu Dongming, executive vice-president of DHL Express Asia Pacific, said the group is planning to put its global shared service center in the city following the good performance in Chengdu.

Xie Shiping, southwest cluster general manager of joint venture DHL-Sinotrans, said the company's Chengdu branch had double-digit growth in 2013 despite a global decrease in foreign trade.

"DHL has been adding investment in Chengdu and southwestern China as the market continues to grow and more clients establish relationships with us," he said.

"Apart from the major clients in electronics, heavy industry and auto manufacturing, DHL has expanded its service to international financial and other foreign institutions in Chengdu."

In February, DHL signed an agreement with the Chengdu international express center to extend its business in the city.

The company's office space will be expanded to 2,000 square meters, able to handle 8,000 metric tons of express cargo annually.

Multinational chemical



The Chengdu High-Tech Zone is home to a number of foreign companies including Medtronic.

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company DuPont opened a Chengdu branch in 2012.

Tony Su, president of DuPont China, said the company's business in the region has grown rapidly because of Chengdu's favorable business environment and support provided by local governments at all levels.

"DuPont's focus on food, energy and protection matched perfectly with the growth strategy and vision of Chengdu, and we look forward to working

with local governments, academics, science institutes and industry partners," he said.

He also noted Sichuan province's large population and well-developed economy.

Chen Fu, deputy director-general of Chengdu Investment Promotion, said the city has become a magnet to multinational companies.

It attracted 95 foreign investment projects in the first half of the year, with actually utilized

foreign capital totaling \$5.1 billion, ranking second among China's 15 sub-provincial cities, trailing only Dalian.

A total of 255 Fortune Global 500 companies have operations in Chengdu with the number reaching 260 by the end of the year, Chen said.

He said the city's attraction to foreign investment "is backed by a convenient logistics network and excellent government services".

Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport, the fourth-largest in China in passenger traffic, has 74 international flights to a range of cities including London, Abu Dhabi, San Francisco and Melbourne.

An express rail from Chengdu that opened last year links China's western region with Lodz, Poland.

The express rail carries laptops, iPads, auto parts and daily necessities produced in

Chengdu and other parts of the country to Europe in 14 days.

Over the past decade, the Chengdu government has been reducing administrative procedures, to make it easier for foreign-funded enterprises to do business. It is one of the Chinese cities with least administrative procedures.

Contact the writers at liy@chinadaily.com.cn and pengchao@chinadaily.com.cn