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ABSTRACT

In the month of May 2016, parts of Sri Lanka were hit by the heaviest recorded rainfall in more than 18 years, which caused severe floods in 24 districts and also horrific landslides, one of which was the worst recorded in Sri Lanka. The floods and landslides resulted in the loss of at least 93 lives and affected almost half a million people. Many lives were saved through search and rescue operations carried out by the Sri Lanka Armed Forces during the natural hazard. The urban flooding too posed a severe threat which requires better professionalism and the identification of appropriate search and rescue equipment for live saving operations. Whilst the military has its search and rescue capacity, enhancing their knowledge via training to achieve international standards in search and rescue will provide an opportunity to save more lives by promoting efficiency, enhance quality and coordination. Sri Lanka Army has performed commendable job, when called to aid to civil authorities, specially, in the wake of natural calamities or man-made disasters. Most of the time armed forces are subjected to call upon to intervene and take on specific tasks only when the situation is beyond the capability of civil administration, in practice, they are the “core of the government response capacity” and tend to be the first responders of the Government of Sri Lanka in any type of disaster. Both the government and the public repose tremendous faith in the armed forces and believe that all emergencies and crises can be handled by the armed forces effectively.