

WEBVTT

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<v SPEAKER_1>Hello again, and welcome to Global Exchange, part of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute's Podcast Network.

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<v SPEAKER_1>I'm your host Colin Robertson.

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<v SPEAKER_1>On this episode that we were recording on January 21, we talked with Eva Cohen about why a civil defense capacity would serve Canadians.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Eva Cohen is an expert in disaster readiness and a long-term advocate for Canadian Civil Protection Agency.

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<v SPEAKER_1>She is the founder and president of Civil Protection Youth Canada, a non-for-profit organization focused on strengthening community resilience and disaster readiness through youth leadership.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Eva, welcome.

00:00:46.280 --> 00:00:48.280

<v SPEAKER_2>Thank you.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Some context for listeners.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Canada faces more frequent and severe natural disasters.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Their frequency, severity and complexity of continues to increase rapidly across Canada and the world.

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<v SPEAKER_1>There were 195 major disasters across Canada from 2008 to 2018, with hundreds of thousands of people impacted and displaced.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Since then, the number of disasters has continued to increase, with the scope and cost of events reaching historic highs, prompted initially by COVID and since then by wildfires, floods, hurricanes and other disasters that we hear about in the news or experience in our daily lives.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Gaps in disaster response capacity at all levels mean reliance on the Canadian Armed Forces for domestic disaster response.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Germany's Federal Agency for Technical Relief offers a model for a structured, volunteer-driven and federally coordinated disaster response system that involves, first, citizen-based capacity, second, standardized technical capabilities and training, third, integration with existing systems, fourth, nation-wide scalability.

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<v SPEAKER_1>So let's get started.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Eva, tell us more about the German experience.

00:02:17.660 --> 00:02:18.880

<v SPEAKER_1>How big is it?

00:02:18.880 --> 00:02:19.920

<v SPEAKER_1>Who pays for it?

00:02:19.920 --> 00:02:21.340

<v SPEAKER_1>How does it work?

00:02:23.740 --> 00:02:30.680

<v SPEAKER_2>I'm really glad you're asking a question like this because many people have a hard time wrapping their head around the German system because it's so unique.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's a federal agency and yet it's 98 percent volunteer-based.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It has 88,000 trained volunteers ready whenever the call comes and 16,000 youth volunteers.

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<v SPEAKER_2>The way it works is that it's really a partnership formed between citizens who bring in their expertise from their professions and get trained in being part of a response structure and being able to operate in a hazardous environment as a support for everyday emergencies basically when disaster strikes.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Beyond emergency response, we need different capabilities and more capacity, and that's what this organization provides through the federal government but on the local level.

00:03:28.280 --> 00:03:29.180
<v SPEAKER_1>How did it get started?

00:03:30.720 --> 00:03:32.520
<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, that's what makes it so unique.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It was after World War II.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Germany did not have a military, but the nuclear threat was still very real, and so there was a need for a civil defense force that's not part of the military usually anyway.

00:03:47.080 --> 00:03:55.940
<v SPEAKER_2>But so the country had to be, or citizens had to be organized to be able to guarantee the survival of the population in wartimes.

00:03:56.840 --> 00:04:14.660
<v SPEAKER_2>And over the many years and decades, the other mandate of the federal government, which is to support in disasters when extra capacity is required became basically their main civil protection mandate.

00:04:14.660 --> 00:04:23.740
<v SPEAKER_2>So when you think of the capabilities required to guarantee the survival of the population, it's very much what we also need when we have disaster impact.

00:04:24.040 --> 00:04:41.280
<v SPEAKER_2>It's repairing damaged infrastructure, providing alternative infrastructure, alternative means of communication or dealing with structural collapse, and providing drinking water, for example, or power supply.

00:04:41.280 --> 00:05:02.160
<v SPEAKER_2>So all those things that we don't necessarily have within our response structure for emergencies is what is required if, and it doesn't really matter whether it's a missile attack or a cyber attack on a critical infrastructure or a devastating earthquake, the damage needs to be dealt with.

00:05:02.160 --> 00:05:06.480
<v SPEAKER_2>And that's what this capability is built to do.

00:05:06.480 --> 00:05:08.700
<v SPEAKER_1>So it starts after the war.

00:05:08.700 --> 00:05:12.840

<v SPEAKER_1>The German, Germany has no military, so there is a need for civil protection.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Did it start, where was the impetus from the lender, from the states or from the national government?

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<v SPEAKER_1>And how did it spread across the country?

00:05:21.540 --> 00:05:22.800

<v SPEAKER_1>Because it's really quite interesting.

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<v SPEAKER_1>I think of Medicare in our country, which started in Saskatchewan.

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<v SPEAKER_1>But I'm interested in how civil protection and defence began in Germany.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, so that was a federal decision.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And then again, I mean, when you think of the structure as it is today, the federal government basically leads in a way that it provides the structure and enables citizens to have a role.

00:05:49.080 --> 00:05:53.840

<v SPEAKER_2>But they do not impose anything on the lender or here it would be the provinces.

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<v SPEAKER_2>They just offer them support if it's needed.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So they never deploy nationally.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's always on demand locally.

00:06:02.960 --> 00:06:07.600

<v SPEAKER_2>And then if it needs to, it can easily scale up regionally and provincially.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So it's a very nice combination of leadership from the top in terms of providing oversight, providing an operational

structure that is very efficient, but not stepping over the jurisdiction of the provinces or states in Germany to say, you know, emergency response and emergency management is your jurisdiction.

00:06:26.100 --> 00:06:30.360

<v SPEAKER_2>And you have to decide when you need extra capabilities or extra capacity.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And it's for you to deploy the assets that we provide.

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<v SPEAKER_1>So it is a bit like our Medicare system with the federal government setting out sort of broad standards in each provincial government, then implementing them in conformity with the standards.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Who pays for it?

00:06:47.380 --> 00:06:52.940

<v SPEAKER_1>Is it the provincial governments or is there grants from the federal government supplemented by the states?

00:06:54.260 --> 00:06:55.940

<v SPEAKER_2>The federal government pays for it.

00:06:55.940 --> 00:06:58.260

<v SPEAKER_2>I like to say it's the taxpayer who pays for it.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And in Germany, that usually was five euros per citizen taxpayer.

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<v SPEAKER_1>So there's actually a fixed amount that when you pay, you know how much you're actually paying for the civil defense side.

00:07:11.260 --> 00:07:15.240

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, if you divide their budget through the taxpayers, that's what you come up with.

00:07:15.500 --> 00:07:17.700

<v SPEAKER_1>That's pretty cheap, five euros a year.

00:07:17.700 --> 00:07:18.520

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, that's what it was.

00:07:18.520 --> 00:07:23.200

<v SPEAKER_2>So last year, they've announced that the budget will be raised by 44%.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So that will increase that to, I think, about 15 euros.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Because of the increased demand for civil defense in Europe now, unfortunately, that is an investment the German federal government is making.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But when you think of the cost structure, I think that's where it's so interesting, because I feel that as citizens, we often don't have many ways to contribute to the response.

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<v SPEAKER_2>You know, we can donate to organizations that are doing a lot of good, but we don't necessarily have a choice to be also part of it.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So we don't have the ability to volunteer our professional skill sets, which is something that this organization provides citizens with.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Let's get into that, because I'm interested in the volunteer side of it, because you point out that there's big volunteers, but in particular, big youth volunteers.

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<v SPEAKER_1>So how does that work?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, that's an interesting aspect of it, because in the past, as you know, Germany had conscription and so Civil Protection was one of the alternatives.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So if you didn't want to join the military.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And then when that ended, there was a little concern that maybe there won't be enough Civil Protection volunteers.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But then they realized that that was not really one of the major factors driving recruitment or longer-term engagement.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And that, in fact, it's the youth program which is the

key pillar of recruitment.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So they start youth now at the age of six years old, it used to be 12, and teach them how to help, how to be of service, to be part of the team, and to have a role in society.

00:09:10.900 --> 00:09:12.820

<v SPEAKER_2>It's all playfully done.

00:09:12.820 --> 00:09:15.520

<v SPEAKER_2>So it's learning to help through play, basically.

00:09:17.040 --> 00:09:20.440

<v SPEAKER_1>Do you do it through the schools, or it's independent?

00:09:20.440 --> 00:09:21.700

<v SPEAKER_2>No, it's through this organization.

00:09:21.700 --> 00:09:23.440

<v SPEAKER_2>So they have a youth chapter of it.

00:09:23.440 --> 00:09:27.220

<v SPEAKER_1>So it's sort of like our Boy Scouts Girl Guides, in a sense, like that.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, you can envision it like that, just that the focus is, and it's done through the Federal Agency.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's not in Germany, it's not part of it, because obviously, for obvious reasons, Germany has a history where a national youth organization is no longer feasible or wasn't after the war.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So it's a separate not-for-profit organization.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But on the other hand, it is totally linked to the Federal Government's agency, because it uses the same locations, the same people, the same equipment, the same materials.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So they are independent in terms of their leadership, and everything is democratically elected.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And what I wanted to say is that instead of being deployed to disasters, youth until the age of 18 are not in any way

put into harm's way, but they use their skills in competitions.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So they have regional competitions first, and then the winners of those compete provincially, and then the winners of those every three years come together in a big national competition where they all get the same tasks and can test their skills.

00:10:42.700 --> 00:10:43.920

<v SPEAKER_2>And it's quite amazing.

00:10:43.920 --> 00:10:50.140

<v SPEAKER_2>And then through this process, they can get badges a little bit, like you were saying, like with the Scouts.

00:10:50.140 --> 00:10:58.860

<v SPEAKER_2>So they get certifications that lead to the equivalent of the adult basic training.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So after a bronze, silver, gold, if you've gone through the whole youth program, you are as trained as an adult who's starting with THW and who's now able to deploy and then add extra skills afterwards.

00:11:12.940 --> 00:11:14.920

<v SPEAKER_1>And we're talking big numbers, aren't we?

00:11:14.920 --> 00:11:18.740

<v SPEAKER_1>In terms of both youth and then we can get into the adult volunteers.

00:11:20.000 --> 00:11:22.840

<v SPEAKER_1>Again, run at the state level, as you say.

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<v SPEAKER_1>And what were the numbers for youth that are involved in Germany?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, so youth, I always think that the THW has a low number compared to the other organizations like Red Cross or St.

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<v SPEAKER_2>John's Ambulance.

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<v SPEAKER_2>They all have a youth chapter in Germany.

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<v SPEAKER_2>There's huge youth volunteer firefighting.

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<v SPEAKER_2>In each community, they have a youth group.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So those numbers are even higher.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But THW, again, as the federal asset, they have around 16,000 youth across the country and 88,000 volunteers.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And the interesting thing there is that they have a steady increase in volunteers.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Now it's actually up to the level where it's not easy for everyone to join right away because they have long waiting lists now because it's such a popular thing for people to join.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And I find this especially interesting because when I talk about the volunteer aspect here, people always feel that, oh, it's a different culture and it won't work and people won't commit to anything long term.

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<v SPEAKER_2>But I think that we're ready for that culture change and especially that people often don't acknowledge the value people get out of the volunteering.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And I think that's one of the reasons why there is so much demand in Germany and so many people willing to step up is because the federal government enables them to have that role in this organization by making sure that they can leave their jobs when they're needed and can deploy and can be of help.

00:12:57.580 --> 00:13:09.860

<v SPEAKER_2>And so it's a very rewarding experience to be of use and to have this purpose in life aside of your professional life.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Eva, you talked about the competitions and the skills.

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<v SPEAKER_1>Can you describe what they are and what are the skills that you learn by joining as a youth and that then enable you to participate as an adult?

00:13:24.200 --> 00:13:24.340
<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah.

00:13:24.340 --> 00:13:28.280
<v SPEAKER_2>So when you think back of the youth, it's called the Agency for Technical Relief.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So the main capabilities focused around this organization in Germany are around technical relief.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So that involves using everything from hand tools to power tools to heavy equipment.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And so the basic training or also the youth training starts with teaching people how to work with different materials.

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<v SPEAKER_2>You know, which tools do you need to work with wood or with stone or with metal?

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<v SPEAKER_2>So if you think, for example, of the collapse of a building, you know, you need to learn and understand what's the difference if you have to go through a ceiling versus a wall.

00:14:09.180 --> 00:14:30.760
<v SPEAKER_2>And so all those little aspects, it's kind of, it's really hands on knowledge, which I often say could also attract youth to go into trades professions, because we often don't have the exposure to how amazing it feels to be able to do things with our hands and to create things and fix things.

00:14:30.760 --> 00:14:33.700
<v SPEAKER_2>So that's one big aspect of the program.

00:14:33.700 --> 00:14:37.180
<v SPEAKER_2>But the other is also focused around rescue.

00:14:38.280 --> 00:14:50.920
<v SPEAKER_2>So how do you get people out of danger zones, hazard awareness, assessments, risk assessments, scene management, and then you can add all kinds of things that are also useful for every daily life.

00:14:50.920 --> 00:14:57.480
<v SPEAKER_2>And I think very empowering is when you think of

yourself, you know, do you know how to change a tire at your car?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Or do you know how to secure the scene of an accident?

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<v SPEAKER_2>And so all those aspects are being taught.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And I think it's important for people to understand that this is not an online course after which you have a paper and your name on the roster.

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<v SPEAKER_2>This is really bringing the community together, all walks of life, all kinds of different professions, everyone chipping in what they know and bringing it together to an organized structure, which really results in this core team in the community that is thinking of the vulnerabilities of the community, coming up with ideas on how to address them, and then is there as a support asset if first responders or authorities decide that they need support.

00:15:48.220 --> 00:15:51.640

<v SPEAKER_3>Hi, I'm Dave Perry, the President and CEO of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

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00:16:11.700 --> 00:16:20.900

<v SPEAKER_1>So how much time would an individual devote each month then, whether you're youth or adult, in terms of the maintenance of your training or just the learning?

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<v SPEAKER_1>Is this like once a week or each night or is it very across the country?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, it varies.

00:16:27.160 --> 00:16:30.840

<v SPEAKER_2>So that's again where you can see that it's a really localized approach.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So some local detachments meet weekly.

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<v SPEAKER_2>When I was part of the THW in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, we met every Friday evening.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So you basically train two or three hours and then you socialize afterwards.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Other local stations decide that they rather do once a month, so a Saturday, maybe the full day on the Saturday.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So it really depends on the appetite of the communities.

00:16:57.400 --> 00:17:01.520

<v SPEAKER_2>The importance is that the standards are being upheld.

00:17:01.520 --> 00:17:33.240

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think that's also an interesting structural aspect of it, is that through the exercises that are taking place, the standard is basically controlled by peers as well, because you keep meeting and exercising with local stations around you, mostly regionally, and then you can see who's doing what and how, and so the standard gets upheld by the people actually being the organization.

00:17:33.240 --> 00:17:35.080

<v SPEAKER_1>All right, you've got this capacity.

00:17:35.080 --> 00:17:36.440

<v SPEAKER_1>Who determines when to use it?

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<v SPEAKER_1>You have a fire or a flood.

00:17:38.340 --> 00:17:44.580

<v SPEAKER_1>Who is it who then calls on the technical relief group to sort of come in and help?

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<v SPEAKER_2>It's always the local jurisdiction and whoever has the

incident for the command.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So it could be the fire chief, but it could also be, let's say you have an accident on the autobahn and the local police gets the call and they say, well, this is nothing that the fire department needs to do.

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<v SPEAKER_2>It can be done by this organization.

00:18:04.120 --> 00:18:11.480

<v SPEAKER_2>So the local jurisdiction can decide who they deploy, but usually it's the fire chief.

00:18:12.740 --> 00:18:13.160

<v SPEAKER_1>Interesting.

00:18:13.160 --> 00:18:22.920

<v SPEAKER_1>So the Technical Relief Unit also have equipment or like cars, trucks, things to help with equipment?

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<v SPEAKER_2>Oh, yes.

00:18:23.440 --> 00:18:31.240

<v SPEAKER_2>They have over 8,000 vehicles and really high tech specialty equipment all the way up to drones.

00:18:31.860 --> 00:18:36.780

<v SPEAKER_2>And this is where it's also interesting to think about the civil-military connection.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So we're hearing more and more about this now that the civil defense aspect is getting more important again.

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<v SPEAKER_2>The military can only be so sufficient and needs support from civil society in many areas as well.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And a lot of that is also logistic related.

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<v SPEAKER_2>So the equipment has various functions.

00:19:01.540 --> 00:19:15.660

<v SPEAKER_2>But when you think of the disaster situation, again, you know, we don't necessarily have heavy equipment, excavator screens,

and all those things in our local detachments or at local stations.

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<v SPEAKER_2>Because local budgets only allow us to prepare for the things that happen most.

00:19:22.060 --> 00:19:26.740

<v SPEAKER_2>The local government does not have the funding to prepare for worst-case scenario.

00:19:26.740 --> 00:19:29.460

<v SPEAKER_2>And that is exactly what this organization is for.

00:19:30.140 --> 00:19:32.100

<v SPEAKER_2>It's almost like a safety net.

00:19:32.100 --> 00:19:36.400

<v SPEAKER_2>And that's why it's such a good fit for our Canadian system.

00:19:36.400 --> 00:19:41.300

<v SPEAKER_2>Because, as you know, when local response gets overwhelmed, the provinces are there to help.

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<v SPEAKER_2>And if that is not enough, then the federal government is there to help.

00:19:44.980 --> 00:19:55.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And they are actually mandated to help with not only financial means and not only the Canadian Armed Forces, but other than that, they really don't have anything to help with.

00:19:55.500 --> 00:20:03.100

<v SPEAKER_2>Whereas, this system in Germany creates this proactive asset that is already there.

00:20:03.100 --> 00:20:09.460

<v SPEAKER_2>So the federal government makes sure that local jurisdictions recruit volunteers and then train them.

00:20:09.460 --> 00:20:19.620

<v SPEAKER_2>And depending on how much the local jurisdiction invests, so does, so the more volunteers I recruit, the more funding I will get to train them.

00:20:19.620 --> 00:20:23.280

<v SPEAKER_2>So it's a hand-in-hand approach of all levels.

00:20:24.340 --> 00:20:26.780

<v SPEAKER_1>Now in Canada, we've got groups like, as you mentioned, St.

00:20:26.780 --> 00:20:30.720

<v SPEAKER_1>John's Ambulance, the Red Cross that often come in for disasters.

00:20:31.900 --> 00:20:34.160

<v SPEAKER_1>Do you have the equivalent in Germany?

00:20:34.160 --> 00:20:40.340

<v SPEAKER_1>And what makes the technical relief group different from, say, the Red Cross in Canada?

00:20:41.520 --> 00:20:51.120

<v SPEAKER_2>Yes, there's also a very strong NGO sector in Germany, and it's a big partnership between all those agencies and organizations.

00:20:53.780 --> 00:20:56.360

<v SPEAKER_2>The difference really is in the mandate.

00:20:56.360 --> 00:20:59.460

<v SPEAKER_2>So, again, when you think of what is needed, St.

00:20:59.460 --> 00:21:09.640

<v SPEAKER_2>John's Ambulance, for example, is specialized on first aid, whereas the Red Cross is specialized on social services and providing assistance to people.

00:21:09.640 --> 00:21:25.680

<v SPEAKER_2>And the technical relief is more focused on addressing the actual damage that's being caused by the disaster and helps to restore infrastructure and to help us get back to normal faster.

00:21:25.680 --> 00:21:35.400

<v SPEAKER_2>Because you can imagine sometimes even the first response is difficult if there's a lot of debris on the roads or areas are submerged in water.

00:21:35.400 --> 00:21:43.440

<v SPEAKER_2>And we don't have the specialty equipment readily available to deal with this impact.

00:21:43.440 --> 00:21:48.040

<v SPEAKER_2>So that's not what any of the other response organizations are providing.

00:21:48.960 --> 00:21:58.920

<v SPEAKER_1>And when you think about it, the work that the Technical

Relief Group does seem to me often what we ask our military to do, which is really not their...

00:21:58.920 --> 00:22:02.900

<v SPEAKER_1>It is one of the things we use them for, but it's not their core purpose.

00:22:02.900 --> 00:22:09.220

<v SPEAKER_1>And so this seems to me something that we are missing and that it would not be impossible for Canada to do something like it.

00:22:09.220 --> 00:22:10.900

<v SPEAKER_1>But what do you think?

00:22:10.900 --> 00:22:16.500

<v SPEAKER_2>Well exactly, because the military has a role and their role is to be the asset of last resort.

00:22:17.280 --> 00:22:20.620

<v SPEAKER_2>So that means when everything else is exhausted.

00:22:20.620 --> 00:22:29.720

<v SPEAKER_2>But the problem is that we don't have a lot to exhaust because we're trying to use our emergency response system for something it's not meant to do.

00:22:29.720 --> 00:22:33.820

<v SPEAKER_2>It wasn't built to respond to disasters or even catastrophic impact.

00:22:33.820 --> 00:22:44.560

<v SPEAKER_2>And that's why every time something happens that overwhelms the system, we are struggling to deal with it because we don't have the asset in place to do that.

00:22:45.260 --> 00:22:51.320

<v SPEAKER_2>And that's where, when we compare with Germany, the government has a second tool in the toolbox.

00:22:51.320 --> 00:22:57.060

<v SPEAKER_2>And that is this Federal Agency where they can offer that help.

00:22:57.060 --> 00:23:06.280

<v SPEAKER_2>So, for example, on the local level, there is a catalog of the capabilities that the THW could add.

00:23:06.280 --> 00:23:14.260

<v SPEAKER_2>And so, as I said earlier, the Fire Chief or the local mayor even could go through that catalog and say, which capabilities

do they have?

00:23:14.460 --> 00:23:17.740

<v SPEAKER_2>How many people do we need this now or not?

00:23:17.740 --> 00:23:20.540

<v SPEAKER_2>And then they can ask for it, and then they get it immediately.

00:23:20.540 --> 00:23:30.840

<v SPEAKER_2>So, it's one phone call rather than waiting for everything to escalate to the point that nothing can be done anymore to say, okay, now we're overwhelmed, we have to declare a state of emergency.

00:23:30.840 --> 00:23:33.120

<v SPEAKER_2>So, now we can ask for more help.

00:23:33.120 --> 00:23:37.160

<v SPEAKER_2>And so, that's why our system is so reactive.

00:23:37.160 --> 00:23:51.660

<v SPEAKER_2>And by creating an agency like the THW in Canada, we could turn it into proactive in a way that the help is already there and you can tap into it immediately when it's needed.

00:23:51.660 --> 00:24:03.800

<v SPEAKER_2>And then that's another aspect which I find very interesting in terms of cost because it really is the most sustainable way to do it, the way it's being done in Germany, because you bring in the resources we already have.

00:24:03.800 --> 00:24:12.520

<v SPEAKER_2>We often say, well, here, when you say the heavy equipment earlier, a lot of that also exists in the private sector, obviously, and that's what we're doing right now.

00:24:12.520 --> 00:24:23.500

<v SPEAKER_2>So we're calling the military or we're heavily relying on the private sector to fix things after the fact, which is usually once the hazard has disappeared.

00:24:23.500 --> 00:24:30.880

<v SPEAKER_2>So in this early response phase where it's still a hazardous environment, the private sector cannot operate safely in that.

00:24:30.880 --> 00:24:36.760

<v SPEAKER_2>And so that's again what delays the response and then also the recovery.

00:24:36.760 --> 00:24:43.660

<v SPEAKER_2>But if we think of who is the private sector, it's people who have the skills.

00:24:43.660 --> 00:25:02.460

<v SPEAKER_2>So if we invite these people into the system, so that now like within the military, they become part of an operational structure, they can use the skills that they've learned in their profession and bring that into the system as an asset, which is otherwise not possible just for liability reasons.

00:25:02.900 --> 00:25:04.780

<v SPEAKER_2>And also the cost situation, right?

00:25:05.480 --> 00:25:12.240

<v SPEAKER_2>The local jurisdictions often are not sure who's going to pay for what has happened.

00:25:12.240 --> 00:25:15.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And so they're very hesitant to ask the private sector.

00:25:15.200 --> 00:25:21.700

<v SPEAKER_2>And then again, the private sector also can't budget for something that may or may not happen.

00:25:21.700 --> 00:25:30.880

<v SPEAKER_2>And so because we're relying heavily on that is why we're so reactive and take so long to recover from disasters.

00:25:32.120 --> 00:25:33.140

<v SPEAKER_1>Eva, what's holding us back?

00:25:33.140 --> 00:25:37.880

<v SPEAKER_1>Because I know you've been beating this drum for a number of years, and it always struck me as quite reasonable.

00:25:37.880 --> 00:25:44.720

<v SPEAKER_1>And as you pointed out, we're encountering more and more disasters, natural disasters.

00:25:44.720 --> 00:25:56.500

<v SPEAKER_1>And it seemed to me something like the Technical Relief Group would make a lot of sense, especially administered as you do it in Germany at the provincial level or the state level.

00:25:56.500 --> 00:25:57.000

<v SPEAKER_2>Yes, it does.

00:25:57.320 --> 00:26:17.120

<v SPEAKER_2>And I'm truly frustrated, as you can imagine, because over those years, which is now 17 years, people have always picked one or two of the aspects they liked about this approach, but they never really understood that if it's not a systematic approach, you just cannot get the result that we need.

00:26:17.120 --> 00:26:34.260

<v SPEAKER_2>And so I hope that now that we rapidly need to get our act together, the time has come to say, we do not have to hastily try to replace the armed forces with something, just so that we have something, but let's do this right and look at it strategically.

00:26:34.260 --> 00:26:48.120

<v SPEAKER_2>And I would always suggest to just strengthen the collaboration with our German allies, because they've been there, they've made their mistakes, they've learned from the mistakes, so they've had 70 years of experience with this approach.

00:26:48.120 --> 00:26:52.500

<v SPEAKER_2>And joining forces with them would really help us to speed up the process.

00:26:53.040 --> 00:27:09.400

<v SPEAKER_2>I also think that there are a lot of interesting exchange opportunities, just when you think of the youth program, how exciting it is to tap into that network of international youth working in this field and organizing exchanges and learning from each other.

00:27:09.400 --> 00:27:25.700

<v SPEAKER_2>And the same is true for if we were to create this asset nationally, we could easily join the EU Civil Protection Mechanism exercises as a partner, maybe at first as an observer until we have our skills developed.

00:27:25.700 --> 00:27:27.680

<v SPEAKER_2>But there's lots of opportunity.

00:27:27.680 --> 00:27:33.860

<v SPEAKER_2>So I think what's been holding us back was first, that the problem hasn't really been identified.

00:27:33.860 --> 00:27:37.820

<v SPEAKER_2>We always thought that our system works as it should and everything is fine.

00:27:37.820 --> 00:27:51.440

<v SPEAKER_2>And then the more disasters increase and the broader the risk and hazard landscape turned out to be, the more we realized that we're coming at, or the system is overwhelmed.

00:27:51.440 --> 00:28:03.300

<v SPEAKER_2>And especially when the military said, okay, we just cannot afford to be called constantly and domestic response should just be as the asset of last resort and not as the asset of first convenience.

00:28:03.300 --> 00:28:05.320

<v SPEAKER_2>That is when people started to think differently.

00:28:05.320 --> 00:28:08.300

<v SPEAKER_2>But then again, and the aspect gets picked off.

00:28:08.300 --> 00:28:10.940

<v SPEAKER_2>Well, maybe we just need more volunteers.

00:28:10.940 --> 00:28:19.480

<v SPEAKER_2>But the framework isn't built to enable volunteers the same way and to train them appropriately and all those things.

00:28:19.480 --> 00:28:26.540

<v SPEAKER_2>So I think what we need now is the political will to connect the dots and make it happen.

00:28:26.540 --> 00:28:28.200

<v SPEAKER_1>So who has to take the first step?

00:28:28.200 --> 00:28:31.180

<v SPEAKER_1>Is it the federal authorities or the provincial?

00:28:31.540 --> 00:28:34.760

<v SPEAKER_1>Who are you looking to to take the lead on this?

00:28:34.760 --> 00:28:39.660

<v SPEAKER_2>What we see that the provincial governments have long realized that there is a need to do more.

00:28:39.660 --> 00:28:49.200

<v SPEAKER_2>And so we see that Ontario has started the Ontario Corps and Nova Scotia has the Nova Scotia Guard and BC is working on something and Quebec is.

00:28:49.200 --> 00:28:51.920

<v SPEAKER_2>But the problem with that is it's all good.

00:28:51.920 --> 00:28:54.060

<v SPEAKER_2>The provinces need to have more.

00:28:54.060 --> 00:28:58.680

<v SPEAKER_2>And I see it as a way to better organize spontaneous volunteers.

00:28:58.680 --> 00:29:00.720

<v SPEAKER_2>So that's a good step forward.

00:29:00.720 --> 00:29:18.760

<v SPEAKER_2>But when you think of a national crisis and several incidents happening across the country where we need to be able to help each other, that's where this standardized approach comes in and the ability to rotate and sustain search capacity.

00:29:18.760 --> 00:29:32.460

<v SPEAKER_2>And if everyone does something and their own thing, then it's very difficult to bring that together and create the interoperability that you need to be able to rapidly work together in a hazardous environment.

00:29:32.460 --> 00:29:35.720

<v SPEAKER_2>So I think it's a good first step that the provinces are doing more.

00:29:35.720 --> 00:29:37.940

<v SPEAKER_2>They need to.

00:29:37.940 --> 00:29:46.340

<v SPEAKER_2>But the federal government should lead this in saying, first of all, they have the civil defense mandate, and we do not have a civil defense core at the moment.

00:29:46.340 --> 00:29:56.100

<v SPEAKER_2>And by using Germany's model, we can create both the civil defense core with the capabilities to support provinces when they need support.

00:29:56.100 --> 00:30:04.440

<v SPEAKER_2>So it's a win-win for everyone, including the local levels and citizens themselves, because it's very empowering for individuals as well.

00:30:04.760 --> 00:30:14.820

<v SPEAKER_2>So with one approach, we can achieve personal resilience, community resilience, and national resilience.

00:30:14.820 --> 00:30:15.840

<v SPEAKER_1>It makes sense to me.

00:30:15.840 --> 00:30:23.120

<v SPEAKER_1>All right, you get into an elevator, and Prime Minister Carney is beside you, and he says, what would you like me to do?

00:30:23.120 --> 00:30:24.760

<v SPEAKER_1>What are you going to tell him?

00:30:26.180 --> 00:30:32.560

<v SPEAKER_2>I guess I would say that our resilience needs to be strengthened to minimize ever-increasing disaster impact.

00:30:32.640 --> 00:30:38.760

<v SPEAKER_2>And with a strategic approach, now is the time to connect those dots and work towards it.

00:30:38.760 --> 00:30:53.140

<v SPEAKER_2>So we can invest the NATO 1.5% spending dedicated to civil preparedness and resilience to rapidly change our reactive emergency response system into an efficient, proactive civil protection, all hands on deck approach.

00:30:53.140 --> 00:31:01.140

<v SPEAKER_2>Three, the Canadian Armed Forces from constant domestic response and instead empower citizens of all walks of life to have a role.

00:31:02.240 --> 00:31:33.920

<v SPEAKER_2>Further, strengthen collaboration with our German and European allies by using lessons learned from Germany's 70 years of proven success and unmatched results, and lay the foundation for all this through youth leadership via the Youth Climate Core Programme starting in April, resulting in a sustainable system for generations to come, while equipping them and their communities with the skills and network required to be ready and stay in control when disaster strikes.

00:31:33.920 --> 00:31:34.920

<v SPEAKER_1>Eva, you convinced me.

00:31:34.920 --> 00:31:38.380

<v SPEAKER_1>If you want to learn more about this, where should our listeners go to?

00:31:39.280 --> 00:31:40.160

<v SPEAKER_1>Do you have a website?

00:31:41.640 --> 00:31:43.400

<v SPEAKER_1>Where should they look?

00:31:43.400 --> 00:31:50.740

<v SPEAKER_2>Yeah, so I founded Civil Protection Youth Canada to give youth this leadership role and bring this mindset change.

00:31:50.740 --> 00:32:05.580

<v SPEAKER_2>And so on our website, we have an update section where

people can find more information, especially our workshop report from a workshop we did together with SeaDog last January, on whether this approach from Germany can work in Canada.

00:32:05.580 --> 00:32:08.080

<v SPEAKER_2>And I think that's a very informative tool.

00:32:08.080 --> 00:32:13.720

<v SPEAKER_2>But the other thing that's really interesting to check out is the THW website at thw.de.

00:32:16.860 --> 00:32:19.240

<v SPEAKER_2>Our website is civilprotection.ca.

00:32:19.240 --> 00:32:24.360

<v SPEAKER_2>But I think you can put that into your program notes for people to find.

00:32:25.080 --> 00:32:26.600

<v SPEAKER_1>Absolutely.

00:32:26.600 --> 00:32:28.220

<v SPEAKER_1>We'll stick those in the program notes.

00:32:28.220 --> 00:32:28.960

<v SPEAKER_1>Excellent.

00:32:28.960 --> 00:32:29.220

<v SPEAKER_1>All right.

00:32:29.220 --> 00:32:35.040

<v SPEAKER_1>My final question is, what do you read in your streaming these days when you're not thinking about civil core defence?

00:32:36.320 --> 00:32:38.120

<v SPEAKER_2>There's a lot of work being done at the moment.

00:32:38.120 --> 00:32:40.260

<v SPEAKER_2>So I don't have as much time to read as I would love to.

00:32:40.260 --> 00:32:53.880

<v SPEAKER_2>But last time I was in Germany, I picked up a book at the airport which I'm still reading, which is called The Last Chance and about the chancellors' hope to protect democracy.

00:32:53.880 --> 00:32:55.140

<v SPEAKER_2>So that's quite interesting.

00:32:55.140 --> 00:33:11.340

<v SPEAKER_2>But in general, I'm a big Ken Follett fan and love to

transport myself into the Middle Evil Times and that's the book I have lying right here that I got for Christmas that I hope I will sometimes find the time to read it.

00:33:11.340 --> 00:33:13.660

<v SPEAKER_1>All right, Ken Follett, perfect.

00:33:13.660 --> 00:33:14.860

<v SPEAKER_1>Eva, thank you.

00:33:14.860 --> 00:33:17.440

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for listening to this episode of The Global Exchange.

00:33:17.440 --> 00:33:19.440

<v SPEAKER_1>We were joined today by Eva Cohen.

00:33:19.440 --> 00:33:27.080

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00:33:28.020 --> 00:33:31.820

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00:33:31.820 --> 00:33:37.300

<v SPEAKER_1>As always, my thanks go out to our producer, Jordyn Carroll, and to Drew Phillips for providing our music.

00:33:37.300 --> 00:33:38.840

<v SPEAKER_1>I'm Colin Robertson.

00:33:38.840 --> 00:33:40.560

<v SPEAKER_1>Thanks for joining us today on The Global Exchange.