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DRONE HOBBYISTS CAN NOW VOLUNTEER TO ASSIST HUMANITARIAN CRISES

 NONPROFIT & SOCIAL CAUSE

UAViators is an humanitarian UAV network, which signs up experienced amateur drone operators who would be willing to provide disaster relief.

The latest technology is frequently only accessible to large companies and wealthy enthusiasts — those who can afford the high cost of groundbreaking products. Often devices, such as 3D printers and drones, could have a huge positive impact on underprivileged people and areas, but the cost proves to be prohibitive. We have already seen numerous enterprises designed to help bridge this gap — such as [E-Nable](#), which connects 3D printing enthusiasts with those in need of prosthetic hands. The latest of these “bridging” initiatives is [UAViators](#) — a humanitarian UAV network — which signs up experienced drone operators who would be willing to provide disaster relief.

UAViators is a subsidiary of the Qatar Computing Research Institute, set up by Director of Social Innovation Patrick Meier, in order to capitalise on the potential of UAVs to assist with humanitarian disasters. It is an volunteer community, united by their interest and expertise with drones, who are ready to help in times of crisis, and are keen to receive training and advice from aid groups in the meantime.

Drones can capture aerial images faster, cheaper and at a higher resolution than satellites, which makes them excellent tools for communicating the lay of the land after hurricanes, earthquakes and other disasters. They enable rapid response, assessing damage and capturing accurate population counts from above — sharing that data with ground teams in real time. UAVs can also stand in as makeshift 3G and 4G cell towers, enabling victims and first response teams to access lifesaving information online. UAViation is training civilian drone pilots so that they can assist with information collection and sharing when the worst happens, increasing the potential of the humanitarian effort

hugely. Hobbyist pilots who join the Rapid Response Roster are also being schooled in a code of conduct to ensure safe and morally responsible use of their drones.

Are there other high-tech enthusiasts who could bring their personal devices to the aid of humanitarian organizations?

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