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Information bulletin

Venezuela: Civil unrest

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Host National Society: Venezuela Red Cross

Other partner organizations: International Committee of the Red Cross

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC), with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), are implementing actions in line with the Movement's Fundamental Principles.

The situation

The general situation of tension, and related social mobilizations, have increased in January and February 2019. Large-scale marches and demonstrations were held in different locations in the country on 23 January, 2 February and 12 February. Non-official sources report deaths and people wounded in the January demonstrations, as well as the looting of markets and businesses.

Venezuela continues to face economic challenges that has severe impacts on the ability of the most vulnerable population to obtain access to food, medication and other basic needs.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Venezuelan Red Cross continues to monitor the situation and is responding with pre-hospital care, first aid and psychosocial support in line with the Movement's Principles, particularly neutrality, impartiality and independence. VRC brigades (volunteers and medical staff) have been mobilized to provide health in emergencies services in Caracas and the branches in Maracaibo, Maracay, Barquisimeto, Valencia, Mérida, El Tigre and Barinas

The VRC has 2,635 volunteers, of which more than 500 are specialized in emergency relief actions, in its 24 sectionals and 14 subcommittees. The National Society has 8 hospitals and 33 outpatient health clinics with 1,000 health professionals (doctors, nurses, technical staff and administrative personnel). The VRC's established material resources (communications equipment, vehicles and installations) are being used in its response actions.



Venezuelan Red Cross volunteers provide their services in line with the Fundamental Principles. Source: Venezuelan Red Cross

A [non-public](#) DREF operation, Venezuela: Preparation for Potential Civil Unrest (MDRVE004), was launched on 27 January 2019. This operation has the main objective to guarantee first aid services in the communities and psychosocial support for at least 10,000 people in the states of Distrito Capital, El Tigre, Táchira, Vargas and Zulia, as well as provide operational support to the Venezuelan Red Cross to enable the continuation and strengthening of its humanitarian response. The VRC's implementation strategy complies with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles and ensures the visibility and respect for the VRC's emblem in all its activities.

In January, the VRC activated its national-level situation room at its national headquarters and in its sectionals. This has enabled the National Society to monitor the situation and deploy its pre-hospital care brigades to provide first aid when required. The Venezuelan Red Cross maintains operational security measures to protect the safety of its volunteers and staff, as well as the people whom it reaches with its actions.

The VRC from the national headquarters to sectionals to committees is coordinating with all its technical areas (health, relief, restoring family links- RFL, communications, among others). The ICRC and the IFRC are providing support for these actions.

VRC communications have disseminated information on its actions and the Fundamental Principles.

The National Society maintains permanent contact and coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The VRC, ICRC and IFRC have a tripartite agreement. A [joint declaration](#) on the situation was issued on 3 February 2019. Three tripartite meetings have been held since late January. The IFRC and ICRC currently are revising the Movement contingency plan to reflect the presence and capacities of both institutions in Venezuela. The VRC, ICRC and IFRC are creating an operational structure that facilitates effective and efficient joint actions.

The IFRC continues to accompany the National Society, which entails monitoring of the situation and the implementation of planned programmatic actions to strengthen National Society capacities. As pertinent, these actions are conducted in synergy with the ICRC.

The ICRC provides comprehensive support to the VRC in order to reinforce its emergency-preparedness capacity. Based on the Safer Access approach, emergency response simulation exercises and workshops have been conducted to help it update contingency plans and develop protocols to mitigate risks. In addition, the ICRC conducts joint activities with local health structures and the National Society branches, focusing on hygiene promotion, first aid and managing transmittable diseases. Moreover, the ICRC has provided the National Society with various forms of material assistance to support its relief department such as emergency telecommunications equipment, all-terrain vehicles and tents for first-aid posts, identification materials such as vests and uniforms for National Society personnel, support for repairing ambulances and other National Society vehicles. During the current situation the ICRC has been providing support to the VRC and coordination with other services and public hospitals to ensure emergency health pre-hospital care to dozens of people.

For the Secretariat, the Head of the Country Cluster Support Team (CCST) for the Andean countries; the Disaster Management Coordinator for South America; and a Logistics Development Delegate were mobilized. In addition to the recent arrival of a Health Delegate, there are currently six staff on loan (including response and security; psychosocial support; and logistics). This team, mobilized by the Secretariat, is providing support to the Venezuelan Red Cross and the IFRC team in Venezuela.

The IFRC President, Francesco Rocca, conducted a mission to Venezuela from 7 to 10 February in support of the Venezuelan Red Cross. The President also met with all Movement components in the country to strengthen shared actions. The IFRC President held a [press conference](#) with the international press on 8 February in Caracas to reiterate the role of the Movement.

The Movement maintains communication with agencies of the United Nations system.

At the regional level, the IFRC Regional Office for the Americas (ARO) has activated its emergency operations centre, which centralizes its monitoring, response actions and scenario planning. At the global level, a Joint Task Force has been created to share information on Movement components' actions to support the Venezuelan Red Cross.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

