



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 25.7M**

Appeal number **MAACD002**

In support of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)



26

National Society branches



68

National Society staff



209,000

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



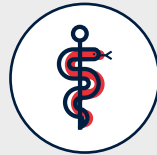
250,000

Climate and environment



450,000

Disasters and crises



3.5M

Health and wellbeing



250,000

Migration and displacement



200,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Emergency response

- food insecurity

Longer term needs

- disaster preparedness and response
- epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response
 - protracted displacement

Capacity development

- regulatory texts
- human, material and financial capacities
 - partnership development

Key country data

Population **92.4M**

INFORM severity rating **very high**

Climate ND-GAIN Index rank **68**

Human Development Index rank **175**

Population below poverty level **63.9%**

Hazards



Food insecurity



Poverty



Disease outbreaks



Floods



Conflict



Population movement

Funding requirements

Total 25.7M CHF

Through the IFRC

20.4M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

4.5M CHF

Host National Society

795,000 CHF

IFRC Breakdown

11M CHF

Ongoing emergency operations

Longer term needs

100,000 CHF

Climate and environment

5M CHF

Disasters and crises

3.3M CHF

Health and wellbeing

150,000 CHF

Migration and displacement

140,000 CHF

Values, power and inclusion

670,000 CHF

Enabling local actors

Ongoing emergencies

MDRCD037

Hunger Crisis

part Regional Hunger Crisis
Appeal MGR60001

Participating National Societies

American Red Cross*

Belgian Red Cross

British Red Cross*

The Canadian Red Cross Society*

French Red Cross

Luxembourg Red Cross

The Netherlands Red Cross*

Norwegian Red Cross*

Red Cross of Monaco*

Spanish Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross

Swiss Red Cross*



NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC Red Cross) was created in 1961 as an auxiliary structure of the public authorities. It is closely connected with the main ministries, both at national and provincial level, and is part of the Technical Secretariat set up by the Ministry of Public Health for the response to COVID-19. With a large network of trained and motivated volunteers, staff and real estate assets, the National Society has a strong added value to address the humanitarian needs in the country. According to its Strategic Plan 2019–2023, the priorities of the National Society for 2023 are to further strengthen the National Society's organizational development and to improve the quality of its services for the benefit of the most vulnerable people.

At the national headquarters, there is an operational management structure with technical units in the fields of health, disaster risk management and emergency response, and support services. The DRC Red Cross is equipped with a Provincial Disaster Response Team with 110 trained members, a national disaster response team with 30 trained members, and 10 staff trained as members of a Regional Disaster Response Team. The

National Society has a pool of approximately 209,000 registered volunteers, 69.6 per cent of whom are men and 30.4 per cent women. It has a branch in each of the 26 provinces and 245 territorial committees.

With 61 years of experience in helping the most vulnerable people, the National Society has extensive experience in responding to epidemics of cholera and Ebola, disasters including floods, volcanic eruptions and landslides, and population movements.

Although the humanitarian challenges are enormous in many parts of the country, capacities and resources are limited to reach the whole country in a single one-year plan. The IFRC made the strategic decision in 2020 to support the DRC Red Cross in six pilot provinces out of the 26 in the country: Kinshasa, Equateur, North Kivu, Lomami, Mai-Ndombe and Kongo Central. The pilot provinces were selected on the basis of the National Society's strategic plan, to build on what has been achieved on the ground. With the support of the IFRC and its membership, the DRC Red Cross has already rehabilitated buildings in some of these provinces where operations and programmes are underway.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is experiencing a complex, protracted crisis resulting from a combination of factors such as conflict, environmental hazards and disease outbreaks. Internal and cross-border displacement, acute food insecurity and malnutrition, epidemics and protection issues affect the population.

The DRC is about the size of Western Europe and is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa. It is endowed with exceptional natural resources, including minerals like cobalt and copper, hydropower potential, significant arable land, immense biodiversity and the world's second-largest rainforest. Most people in the DRC have not benefited from this wealth.

A long history of conflict, political upheaval, instability and authoritarian rule have led to a grave, ongoing humanitarian crisis. There are more than 120 active armed groups in eastern DRC, with a resurgence of violence in 2022. The most active groups are the Allied

Democratic Forces, the March 23 Movement (M23), and the Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO). Conflict and violence continues to provoke significant displacement of populations.

Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, son of Etienne Tshisekedi, the country's longstanding opposition leader, won the December 2018 presidential election. He succeeded Joseph Kabila, who had led the country for 18 years, in the first peaceful transition of power in the DRC's history. There are indications that a new social contract may be emerging between the state and its citizens, through the rollout of free primary education, increased transparency and public sector reforms, and an emphasis on conflict prevention and stabilization in eastern DRC. The next general election is scheduled for 2023.

Economic growth rebounded to 5.7 per cent in 2021 after a pandemic-induced slowdown to 1.7 per cent in 2020. According to COVID-19 surveys, more than 10 per cent of household members have lost their jobs

in Kinshasa, while 20 per cent have reduced their food consumption due to rising prices. However, the poverty rate decreased to 72.1 per cent in 2021 and is expected to decrease by one percentage point each year starting in 2022. This is due to favourable economic prospects, and despite the lasting adverse effect of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the DRC is among the five poorest nations in the world and continues to have the second-highest number of people living in poverty in sub-Saharan Africa – more than 65 million in 2020. One in every six people living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa lives in the DRC.

The DRC ranks 164 out of 174 countries on the 2020 [Human Capital Index](#), set at 0.37, which is below the sub-Saharan Africa average of 0.4. A Congolese child born today can expect to achieve only 37 per cent of their potential, compared with what would have been possible if they had benefited from a full, quality schooling experience and optimal health conditions. The main contributors to the low score are low child survival under the age of five, stunted growth and a low quality of education.

The DRC has one of the highest stunting rates in sub-Saharan Africa, and malnutrition is the underlying cause of almost half the deaths of children under the age of five. Unlike other African countries, the prevalence of stunting in the DRC has not decreased over the past 20 years; in fact, it has increased by 1.5 million due to the very high fertility rate. Access to education has improved considerably over the last two decades, especially for girls and younger children. Between 2000 and 2017, primary school attendance increased from 52 to 78 per cent, but the quality of education is very poor.

Ongoing emergency response

For real-time information on emergencies, see [IFRC GO page DRC](#)

- Appeal number: MDRCD037, part of MGR6001 Africa Hunger Crisis
- Appeal launch date: 9 July 2022
- Appeal end date: 31 December 2023
- People affected: 5.4M
- People to be assisted: 450,000

The DRC Red Cross has been responding to the food security crisis in the country through a Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation from

July 2022. In view of the deteriorating situation, DRC is now one of the priority countries supported by the IFRC's regional [Hunger Crisis](#) Emergency Appeal. Launched in October 2022, it aims to scale up IFRC's regional immediate and life-saving response to the food insecurity crisis currently affecting the region. Country prioritization is based on a multivariate analysis, which includes the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC), and focuses on those communities experiencing a crisis or worse level of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+). Details of the geographic areas covered will be provided in each country plan of action. (See also under Disasters and crises section for food insecurity in DRC).

At a time of intense global humanitarian need and competing demands, Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing one of the most alarming food crises in decades. Roughly 146 million people - a figure approaching half the entire population of the United States - are suffering from acute food insecurity and require urgent humanitarian assistance. Hunger is one of the most undignified sufferings of humanity and has severe repercussions on African communities who face multiple shocks, compromising their lives, livelihoods, and prospects. Driven by a complex interplay of insecurity and armed conflict, extreme weather events, climate variability, and negative macroeconomic conditions, this crisis is distinct in its magnitude and geographic scope. As such, it requires an exceptional mobilization and a massive effort by all concerned institutions and states to address the drivers that underpin food insecurity in Africa.

Short description of the emergency operational strategy

African National Societies supported by the IFRC and participating National Societies have developed an emergency response, with an emphasis on meeting the urgent food, nutrition, and water sanitation and hygiene needs of the most vulnerable groups impacted by the crisis, and on protecting their livelihoods while setting a foundation for resilience building.

The operational pillars are defined as:

- Cash transfers for safety nets and safeguarding livelihoods: improve food access and maintain consumption levels through the scale-up of emergency food assistance, primarily through cash transfers to poor households experiencing acute food insecurity
- Health and nutrition: nutrition surveillance, knowledge-raising, and health promotion

- Water, sanitation and hygiene: provision of water, sanitation and hygiene services will take a variety of forms, including the direct provision of safe water or rehabilitation of water supply infrastructure, in-kind provision of water treatment and storage products, and the use of cash or voucher assistance to support water, sanitation and hygiene objectives
- Cross-cutting sectors – protection and prevention: community engagement and accountability, and protection, gender and inclusion are critical and transversal components of the operation, and vital to ensuring that the operation recognizes and values all community members as equal partners whose diverse needs, priorities and preferences guide the Red Cross Red Crescent actions.

In addition to the direct provision of support, National Societies play an important role in enabling and facilitating access to services and goods provided by governments and other actors. In-country geographic targeting of affected regions and smaller administrative units (e.g. districts) is based on “IPC/Cadre Harmonise” data and other recognized references. Targeting is further refined through more detailed/disaggregated data from more focused assessments of National Societies and/or partner agencies, where these have been or can feasibly be conducted.

The targeted groups are acutely food insecure households struggling to meet their basic needs due to

climatic shocks and the compounding effects of other food insecurity drivers described above. When geographic targeting is completed, the next step is to target the affected households based on food security and economic criteria, agreed with the community, or ideally developed jointly with them. Within these food insecure and poor households, targeting can be further refined by identifying social categories. Protection, gender and inclusion considerations are incorporated into the targeting process to provide an understanding and response to individuals and groups based on their specific risks, needs, and concerns.

Longer-term strategy

The hunger crisis Emergency Appeal sits within the IFRC’s Africa Zero Hunger Initiative, which informs longer-term food security and livelihood plans of National Societies in Africa. The initiative takes a holistic approach to food security, combining rapid support for food security and livelihoods with its long-term strategy of working towards zero hunger and more sustainable development. The regional Emergency Appeal focuses on responding to the immediate needs of people affected, and its approach facilitates the transition to longer-term programming. Upon the completion of the Appeal, the IFRC - together with the National Society - will continue its long-term work through the Zero Hunger Initiative programming. This will be integrated into the DRC country plan 2024.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

The DRC is the 10th most vulnerable and the 189th most ready country in the world, when it comes to the impacts of climate change, according to the [ND-GAIN Index](#) in 2020. It is exposed to increased vulnerabilities linked to climate change, such as food insecurity due to crop losses and failures, increased livestock mortality, negative impacts on fisheries and damage to infrastructure.

The intensity of heat waves, drought and rainfall is expected to increase. More extreme weather events, such as intense rainfall after prolonged dry spells, are likely to lead to erosion and flash flooding, damaged roads and infrastructure, wiped out crops, and to put additional lives at risk. Environmental degradation, changes in water resources and the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services constitute serious obstacles to the country’s continued development. Changes

in precipitation patterns can have far-reaching consequences for ecosystems and biodiversity, food production, the water industry and rivers. Climate change is likely to exacerbate these concerns, because the majority of agricultural production – providing livelihoods for a large part of the population – is rainfed. Rising temperatures and more variable rainfall will also impact the country’s forests, which are critical to rural livelihoods, and the ecosystem services they provide, which are already under threat from land use changes and a growing demand for charcoal and tropical forest products.

In 2019, the DRC experienced one of the largest losses of primary tropical forests in the world: 475,000 hectares. This was second only to Brazil, which lost more than one million hectares of forest in the Amazon, according to Global Forest Watch. A nationwide project is underway to combat deforestation through the use of domestic

gas. According to the Ministry of the Environment, the first phase, launched in March 2020, has saved 250 hectares of forest.

Forests are critical to the biodiversity of the DRC. Indeed, more than half the country's 2.3 million square kilometres are covered by forests. This represents 47 per cent of forest cover in Africa and has a huge influence on the lives of the people who consider it to be their 'motherland'. Timber and mining operations are a major source of income for the country but harm the climate. Energy from firewood accounts for about 88 per cent of total energy consumption in the domestic and industrial sectors, compared with other sources of energy such as electricity, oil and gas, which are more expensive.

The DRC has finalized a new [National Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) (2022–2026) as stipulated in the Paris Agreement. This plan, as well as the [National Strategic Development Plan](#) (2019–2023), encourage the implementation of reforestation programmes and domestication of species of high ancestral value.

Main actions and areas of support

The National Society is part of the IFRC's [Global Climate Resilience Programme](#), which aims to foster an unprecedented scale-up in locally led climate-smart disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts to prevent and reduce climate-related disaster impacts. It will also build community-level climate resilience. The programme aims to support 500 million people in 100 of the most climate-vulnerable countries, focusing on the least supported and marginalized communities. This holistic, multi-year programmatic approach consists of four operational pillars: (1) scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction and anticipatory action and preparedness, (2) reducing the public health impacts of climate change, (3) addressing climate displacement, and, (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

The IFRC network will support the DRC Red Cross in taking urgent action to adapt to the growing and changing risks of climate and environmental crises, and adopt environmentally sustainable practices that contribute to climate change mitigation. The DRC Red Cross will contribute to the DRC National Climate Change Adaptation Plan for 2022–2026, through intensive tree planting and the preservation and restoration of the DRC's rainforests between 2023 and 2025. This is part of the IFRC Pan African initiative on tree planting and care.

With support from the IFRC and network partners, the DRC Red Cross will work to:

- Implement a tree planting initiative by planting 4,000 trees per year – contributing to the preservation and restoration of Congo's rainforests between 2023 and 2025
- Harness nature-based solutions focused on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation, with particular emphasis on planting trees and mangroves
- Carry out actions to adapt to the growing and changing risks of climate and environmental crises, protecting at least 250,000 people per year from the heat in at least three towns in the operational areas of Grand Ouest and Grand Kivu
- Implement environmental or climate campaigns focused on behaviour change, plastic reduction and clean-ups
- Raise community awareness on the impact of climate change
- Mainstream climate-smart approaches with communities
- Implement environmentally sustainable practices and contribute to climate change mitigation
- Build and enhance the climate action capacity of National Society volunteers and technical staff

Participating National Societies that contribute to the implementation of these interventions are the Belgian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross.

Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see IFRC GO page [Democratic Republic of Congo](#)

The DRC is highly vulnerable to sudden, recurrent or protracted crises and disasters. The INFORM Global Risk Index 2022 data reports that the country is at very high risk of humanitarian crises that are likely to require international assistance, such as epidemics, conflict and environmental hazards, including volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods and droughts.

The DRC's exposure to these risks is exacerbated by poverty and political insecurity. The most impactful environmental disasters in the DRC have been floods and epidemics, which accounted for 27 per cent and 58 per cent respectively. Lower-income populations tend to live in more hazardous locations, with a high potential for significantly increased exposure.

Food security is affected by land and infrastructure degradation due to erosion and landslides, a rise in livestock and crop diseases due to temperature increases, direct crop failure due to floods and heavy rains, and nutrient leaching and fungal growth due to high humidity. It was estimated that 27 million people in the country would need humanitarian assistance in 2022, an increase of seven million from 2021. Main factors influencing food insecurity are conflicts and population movements in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika, and climate change influencing agricultural production and food availability. Raw material and fertilizer have gone up in price and food reserves are being depleted.

With 26 branches, an active volunteer base and high levels of access and acceptance across the territory, the DRC Red Cross is a key humanitarian actor and first responder. It will contribute to the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, implementing elements of the Pan-African Zero Hunger Initiative. The objective of the DRC's strategic priority is to address severe food insecurity (supported through the IFRC regional hunger crisis Appeal), support recovery and build resilience in the country.

The National Society is a member of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and contributes to the DRC National Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2023 for Natural Risk and Disaster Reduction, through disaster preparedness and risk reduction, and strengthening its capacity to effectively manage disasters and emergencies. This is part of the IFRC Pan-African Red Ready initiative.

The National Society is part of the Pilot Programme Partnership between the IFRC and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission (see under IFRC network section), and its work on this programme will focus on South Kivu, one of the most vulnerable provinces in the DRC. The province is heavily affected by conflicts, epidemics and frequent natural hazards, and a growing number of people are on the move, which increases the existing needs of host populations. Actions related to disaster risk management and cash transfers under this programme will strengthen the auxiliary role and operational capacity of the DRC Red Cross, as it participates in the development of national and local capacities. Its focus will be on communities, for rapid and effective mitigation, early action, and response and recovery in emergencies, disasters and crises.

Main actions and areas of support

To increase the resilience of communities to the multiple and evolving shocks and hazards of environmental crises, the IFRC network will support the DRC Red Cross to:

- Intensify the implementation of the IFRC Pan-African Red Ready and Zero Hunger initiatives
- Contribute to scaling up humanitarian action and risk reduction, building local capacity for early warning systems and early and effective responses
- Engage in preparedness and capacity building processes such as IFRC preparedness for effective response ([PER](#)), cash transfer preparedness and logistics
- Contribute to the IFRC's global leadership on cash transfer programmes, systematically integrating it into intervention operations, reaching at least 4,000 people per year with support services, in-kind donations, and cash and vouchers for emergency response and recovery. 50 cent of aid will be in the form of cash by 2025
- Strengthen its leadership in the field of humanitarian law to help the Government adopt new legal instruments related to disaster law
- Develop competencies and skills in the use of fundraising mechanism tools in emergency situations
- Advocate with the Ministry of the Interior on the facilitation and national regulation of relief operations, including the deployment of teams and equipment during emergency operations and disasters

The Belgian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross will support the DRC with these interventions.

Health and wellbeing

The DRC faces recurrent disease outbreaks such as COVID-19, cholera, measles, Ebola, meningitis, plague and yellow fever. This epidemiological context is unlikely to change in 2023.

Between February and May 2021, the province of North Kivu faced an epidemic resurgence, its 12th outbreak, of the Ebola virus in the Butembo health zone, and the 13th outbreak in the Beni health zone between October and December 2021. On 4 July 2022, the Minister of Public Health announced the end of the 14th outbreak

of the disease in Equateur province, which killed five people in the city of Mbandaka, three of whom were children. Surveillance teams followed up 53.8 per cent of the 1,076 identified contacts.

Malaria is still a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the DRC, and cases are expected to increase in terms of seasonality and geography. This is due in part to rising temperatures, more variable precipitation and increased humidity, which affect the lifecycle and habitat of malaria-carrying mosquito and parasite species. This situation is exacerbated by high vaccine hesitancy and the negative impact of COVID-19 on the utilization of health services since 2020.

There has been a reduction in the number of antenatal care visits and an increase in the number of pregnancies, as well as increased incidences of sexual and gender-based violence. Nearly 23 million children missed out on routine vaccinations in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the highest number in more than a decade, according to recent data from WHO and UNICEF. There is concern that the temporary interruption of basic health care delivery, including routine immunization services, may lead to a secondary health crisis.

The under-five mortality rate in the DRC is high. This is partly due to the high prevalence of malnutrition, which is responsible for 45 per cent of deaths among young children. The prevalence of chronic malnutrition among children aged between six months and five years has remained stable over the past decade, currently estimated at 43 per cent. On average, 6.3 million young children are chronically malnourished in the DRC, and this significantly reduces the human capital needed for the country's socio-economic development. An estimated 50 per cent of this malnutrition is associated with diarrhoea or repeated intestinal nematode infections from unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene. The combination of repeated malnutrition and diarrhoea creates a vicious cycle that hinders a child's growth and development. The level of stunting among children under five is particularly alarming – it affects about 42 per cent of children and almost one in five children under six months old. The level of stunting rises to 52 per cent of children in the poorest households, compared with 18 per cent of those living in the wealthiest households. Stunting levels are above the national average in 13 out of 26 provinces.

The DRC Red Cross has been responding to multiple disease outbreaks over the years, including notably the

series of Ebola virus disease outbreaks between 2018 and 2021 in the Equateur province and eastern part of the country. Through an IFRC [Emergency Appeal](#), the DRC Red Cross carried out critical activities during these outbreaks, including safe and dignified burials, infection prevention and control in health facilities, and risk communication and community engagement. In North Kivu, Ituri and South Kivu, by March 2021, its almost 1,000 volunteers involved in community engagement had reached almost 4 million people with door-to-door and mass sensitization activities. Over 1.6 million community feedback data points have been collected from community members, analysed and informed decision making across pillars. This is one of the largest feedback platforms developed by the IFRC network in the world.

With its national network of community volunteers and extended experience responding to outbreaks, the DRC Red Cross is in a unique position to support the health and well-being of communities. The IFRC network will support it in positioning itself to leverage its auxiliary role in developing national public health strategies, advocacy, and policy platforms and mechanisms. The DRC Red Cross will also focus on the health and well-being of communities, ensuring they are protected through access to sustainable, affordable, appropriate and quality health services. It will preserve the health and dignity of communities in emergency situations, by providing people with access to appropriate basic health services and affordable, appropriate, sustainable and environmentally friendly water, sanitation and hygiene services.

Main actions and areas of support

The IFRC and network partners will support the National Society to:

- Reach 3.5 million people per year with health services to help protect and improve the health and well-being of communities
- Reach 5,000 people a year with mental health and psychosocial support services
- Train at least 5,000 people a year in first aid
- Contribute to preserving the health and dignity of communities in emergency situations by giving them access to appropriate health services
- Reach one million people each year with water, sanitation and hygiene services

- Invest in epidemic preparedness and response at the community level for surveillance, early detection and rapid response to outbreaks and other health risks, including by involving traditional healers, religious leaders, community-based organizations, community leaders, schools, media and other community networks and volunteers as community responders
- Increase access for communities exposed to pandemics and epidemics to affordable, appropriate and environmentally friendly water, sanitation and hygiene services
- Contribute to a 50 per cent reduction in deaths related to cholera and other diarrhoeal diseases, by promoting access to and the use of clean water and sanitation infrastructure
- Respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to implement community engagement and accountability activities as well as water, sanitation and hygiene activities

The National Societies contributing to these interventions are the Belgian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross.

Migration and displacement

There has been widespread forced displacement of people fleeing from conflicts, epidemics and disasters in the DRC. As no national registration system exists, migration statistics are provided by humanitarian organizations and verified by the United Nations and International Organization for Migration. However, they do not cover the entire territory or offer a very reliable estimate of the situation. The majority of people have been forced to move because of the Congo wars, ethnic conflicts and clashes between armed groups and government forces, while others have been displaced by floods, earthquakes and epidemics such as cholera, measles, Ebola and COVID-19.

In March 2022, there were almost six million internally displaced persons in the DRC, 96 per cent of whom were displaced by conflict or attacks by armed groups. The areas most affected by conflict and violence are the eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, and they also host the majority of internally displaced persons: an estimated 1.9 million in North Kivu, 1.4 million in South Kivu and 1.9 million in Ituri.

The violent clashes which intensified in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces in late March 2022 have led to a refugee influx in the Kisoro district of southwest Uganda, while provoking new displacement within the DRC. Most people are being accommodated by host families, or in markets and schools.

The number of refugees hosted by the DRC was 523,700 in 2019, which is relatively close to the 537,100 recorded in 2017, and asylum seekers numbered 3,200. The majority of the refugees in 2019 came from the Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan, and they were mostly travelling to South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi and Uganda. A new influx of Central African Republic refugees arrived in the Nord-Ubangi province in January 2022. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that more than 3,000 new Central African Republic refugees had experienced harassment and looting by an armed group and had registered in Limasa, about 265km from the town of Gbadolite.

Main actions and areas of support

The DRC Red Cross's neutrality, access and integrated programming provide a strong foundation for its work with people on the move. The IFRC network will support it to engage with migrants, displaced people and host communities to assess, understand and respond more effectively to their priority needs. The DRC Red Cross plans to:

- Assess, understand and respond effectively to the priority needs of 250,000 migrants, displaced and host communities each year
- Provide humanitarian assistance and protection for migrants and displaced people at main points along migration routes, and access to durable solutions where needed
- Operate along the main migratory routes, establishing humanitarian service points, and providing migrants and displaced people access to assistance, protection and integration
- Engage with the authorities and other actors on migration and displacement solutions
- Set up first aid stations in priority branches
- Train volunteers and community members on first aid



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Values, power and inclusion

DRC was ranked 144 on the [Global Gender Gap Index](#) in 2022.

Women in the DRC face significant barriers to economic opportunities and empowerment. Only 16.8 per cent of women have completed secondary school, about half of the rate of completion for men. Early marriage and high reproduction rates represent a challenge, and women and girls without any education have a reproduction rate twice that of women who complete secondary school. The participation of women in the DRC's labour force is estimated at nearly 62 per cent, and most of them work in agriculture.

On 27 August 2020, the Deputy Minister of Planning and the Minister of State for Gender, Family and Child launched a new revision of the National Strategy for Combating Gender-based Violence. It aimed to eliminate all forms of violence against women in the DRC and to define a reference framework for the prevention of crimes and the care of survivors.

However, in a 2021 report, *Médecins Sans Frontières* warned of a lack of support available for survivors of sexual violence in the DRC. The shortcomings it identified mirror the weakness of the response to gender-based violence generally in the country. In the first half of 2020, the United Nations estimated that only one in four

survivors had access to medical care, five per cent had access to psychosocial assistance, 15 per cent to legal assistance, and only 0.5 per cent to socio-economic reintegration. Given the magnitude of this kind of violence and its impact, the DRC authorities and their partners were urged to act swiftly to respond to these huge medical, legal, socio-economic and protection needs.

The situation in the DRC also has a devastating impact on children. Grave violations of children's rights are compounded by the massive population displacements, which increase the vulnerability of children and put them at risk of violence and exploitation.

In 2020, the DRC's National Assembly passed its first law on the rights of people living with disabilities, which could improve the lives of millions of people across the country.

Main actions and areas of support

The DRC Red Cross puts strong emphasis on protection, gender and inclusion in the delivery of its action, and leverages community engagement and accountability in its people-centred approach. Dignity, access, participation and safety for people of all identities are at the heart of everything it does. It will integrate gender and diversity into all its services and programmes, and develop initiatives to fight against sexual and gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination. The DRC Red Cross aims

to be a safe and inclusive organization, and it will revitalize its youth section.

To do this, the IFRC network will work to strengthen the capacities of the National Society to reach more branches and increase awareness and activities. The IFRC network will support the National Society in developing the role of young people. The DRC Red Cross will engage with the community to ensure better protection of people, their dignity and contributions to peaceful environments, and more inclusive work dynamics, greater diversity, and better resilience. Activities will include:

- Sensitizing communities affected by crises on sexual and gender-based violence, protection, gender and inclusion, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, in the branches of two target operational areas
- Supporting equitable access to quality education for all boys and girls affected by disaster, crisis or population movement
- Contributing to positive change in communities through the wider dissemination of knowledge, ownership and practical application of humanitarian values and the Fundamental Principles, with particular emphasis on the knowledge, skills and behaviour of young people

- Establishing a feedback mechanism in programmes and services
- Organizing training and awareness sessions for managers and volunteers on sexual and gender-based violence, protection, gender and inclusion, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Organizing a national workshop on the sexual and gender-based violence and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse strategy and action plan
- Integrating and institutionalizing community engagement and accountability in National Society policies, operations and procedures
- Advocating with state authorities and other partners for equitable access to education for girls and boys in the branches of two target operational areas
- Implementing the IFRC protection, gender and inclusion policy, demonstrating tangible progress against agreed institutional and programming goals, including equal gender representation at all levels of leadership

The National Societies contributing to these interventions are the Belgian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross.

Enabling local actors

The DRC Red Cross is committed to pursuing its institutional strengthening as stated in its Strategic Plan 2019–2023. It carried out the self-assessment part of the Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process in 2017, and this is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The National Society is also committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process, and is at the action and accountability phase. The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyze the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and ultimately take necessary action to improve it.

The DRC Red Cross will need continuous support from the IFRC network, due to the size of the country and the organizational development required to address the many humanitarian challenges in the DRC. The priorities identified by the National Society relate to regulatory texts, human, material and financial capacities,

partnership development, digital transformation and accountability.

Engaged

The DRC Red Cross is seeking strategic partnerships for the medium and long term, and to strengthen its auxiliary role to the public authorities. The National Society also has to innovate, adopt and fully deploy digital technologies to become a partner of choice.

The IFRC network will support the National Society to:

- Increase its engagement in Government-led platforms, and thus actively participating in the achievement of humanitarian and development objectives
- Participate regularly in cluster meetings to influence decision-making and motivate policy change
- Produce and broadcast radio and television programmes on the National Society's activities

- Use innovative and transformative approaches to better anticipate, adapt to and respond to complex challenges and opportunities
- Implement digital transformation, according to the digital maturity model outlined in the IFRC Digital Transformation Strategy
- Use a Federation-wide approach to plan and monitor the National Society's activities, and report on the impact of the IFRC network
- A functional data management system that informs decision-making and supports the monitoring and reporting on impact and evidence of IFRC network contributions
- The development and institutionalization of a policy for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and an action plan to enforce prevention and support survivors
- The training of staff on prevention of fraud and corruption

The Belgian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross will support these activities.

Accountable

The DRC Red Cross aims to reduce its extreme financial dependence on external funding. It currently lacks a resource mobilization policy and strategy, and a business plan. It does not capitalize on its vast network of volunteers, and there is little budgeted for investment.

Internal and external financial control continues to be the National Society's priority for increasing its accountability. This requires improvement. The National Society will continue to implement initiatives on the mechanisms for combating corruption and fraud, and improving the transmission of reports and supporting documentation between the headquarters, branches, partners and donors. Initiatives will comply with statutory contractual provisions and the National Society's procedures.

The DRC Red Cross and its partners will therefore focus on the following areas:

- Strengthening resource and financial management
- Building consolidated accounts of all operations and all partners
- The submission of an externally audited financial statement to the IFRC
- Making an inventory of the income generating activities of the DRC Red Cross and set up a mechanism for monitoring and maximizing revenue
- Implementing a business plan on the management of the National Society income generating activities to reduce external financial dependence by at least 40%

The Belgian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross will support these activities.

Trusted

The DRC Red Cross intends to position itself as a trusted member of the IFRC network and its partners, based on mutual respect and cooperation. It plans to strengthen its internal policies base and invest in their implementation. The IFRC network will support the National Society to:

- Align itself with the principles of the IFRC National Society development compact
- Strengthen its integrity and reputation risk mechanisms
- Prioritize volunteer development and youth action as key catalysts for behavioural change and local action, ensuring access and building trust in all contexts, including creating and implementing youth engagement strategies
- Foster a more diverse leadership through increased volunteer and youth participation, and equitable geographical representation

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC country cluster delegation in Kinshasa supports the DRC Red Cross on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development, and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme. The IFRC supports the National Society in strengthening its auxiliary role by meeting key stakeholders at government level on a regular basis.

With staff based in Goma, Bunia and Lomami, IFRC provides support to the National Society emergency operations and thematic programmes in the DRC, in particular disaster preparedness, health, and protection, gender and inclusion. The support includes planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting, as well as participation in monitoring and evaluation.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the DRC Red Cross through a number of Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeals [operations](#) in relation to food insecurity, population movement, floods and disease outbreaks, including Ebola virus disease, plague, meningitis, measles, polio, yellow fever and cholera. One Emergency Appeal and one DREF operation launched in 2022 will cross over to 2023. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC, through its global Appeal, has supported the National Society in its COVID-19 response and for the immunization rollout programme in Africa.

IFRC membership coordination

The IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing common priorities; co-developing common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, development assistance, and the auxiliary role efforts to reinforce the role of National Societies in their respective countries.

The IFRC's operational team in the DRC maintains effective cooperation with all IFRC members and provides

informal leadership and guidance through regular discussions and dialogue.

The National Society coordinates the implementation of its cooperation strategy for the execution of its strategic plan, and ensures better planning and efficient and transparent management of the resources allocated to programmes and projects. It keeps its partners regularly informed of activities planned and carried out with other external partners, in order to guarantee the coherence and coordination of all actions contributing to the implementation of its strategic plan.

The DRC Red Cross is part of the four IFRC Pan-African Initiatives focusing on Tree Planting and Care; Zero Hunger; Red Ready; and National Society Development. These initiatives are reflected under the relevant sections of this plan.

The DRC Red Cross is part of the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#) between the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission and the IFRC. It benefits from the support of the French Red Cross (as the lead EU National Society), Luxembourg Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross for the implementation of activities in all the thematic pillars supported by the programme: disaster risk management, epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response, humanitarian assistance and protection to people on the move, cash and voucher assistance, and risk communication and community engagement and accountability. The partnership meets the realities of extended crises with longer-term predictable funding, facilitating actions and processes with greater impact. It leverages the IFRC's global network and unique access to people and communities, and it helps to fulfil the ambitions of the European Union as the biggest donor for international aid in the world.

The DRC Red Cross, with the support of participating National Societies, is implementing several programmes in different geographical locations on thematic areas clearly identified in its strategic plan, and which contain elements of National Society capacity building.

Belgian Red Cross supports the DRC Red Cross in the province of Kwango (Barrière, Bangombe and Pont-Wamba health areas in the Kenge health zone), with road safety projects, community resilience in the face of risks of environmental disasters (erosion, violent winds,

Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Engaged	Accountable	Trusted
Belgian Red Cross	CHF 1.46M								
French Red Cross	CHF 1.00M								
Luxembourg Red Cross	CHF 0.22M								
Spanish Red Cross	CHF 1.17M								
Swedish Red Cross	CHF 0.63M								

Total

4.48M

flooding), community health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (drilling, family latrines, hygiene promotion), and capacity building, for the period 2022 to 2026.

French Red Cross partners with the DRC Red Cross for its actions particularly in eastern DRC. It focuses on food security and health (HIV, TB, malaria) in Kwango and South Kivu. It also contributes to strengthening the National Society's strategy on protection and gender-based violence, infection prevention and control activities, and response to epidemics. A twinning of the two National Societies nursing institutes has been initiated.

Luxembourg Red Cross supports the DRC Red Cross with shelter – specifically the construction of houses for survivors of sexual violence – and the rehabilitation of the Panzi hospital in South Kivu. It also provides support in the area of protection, gender and inclusion.

Spanish Red Cross gives support to the Red Cross of the DRC in the province of Kwilu/Tshikapa (more

specifically in the cities of Bandundu and Kikwit), since 2014, by supporting food security and nutrition projects (including agricultural support/associations, food processing for malnourished children), and health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (latrines, hygiene promotion). Its cross-cutting themes are protection, gender and inclusion, community engagement and accountability, protection of the environment, and institutional development. The current project covers the period 2022–2024.

Swedish Red Cross supports the DRC Red Cross in the areas of disaster management, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene. It supports a disaster risk reduction and community resilience programme in Kinshasa (Limete / Kingabwa) and Goma, over the period 2022–2024. It also contributes to the implementation of protection, gender and inclusion actions, green response, and to strengthening the capacities of the National Society in the fields of volunteering, and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Movement coordination

Regular senior management meetings between the DRC Red Cross, the IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) enable effective International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement coordination in the DRC, which is crucial to ensure the impact and relevance of the Movement in a country with multiple crises and great needs. This is carried out in line

with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

The participating National Societies operate under the umbrella agreements concluded between the IFRC or the ICRC and the Government of the DRC, as well as under the auxiliary role of the DRC Red Cross in the

humanitarian field. This is the National Society's mandate as stipulated in the legal decree establishing the National Society.

In the DRC, and in line with its mandate, the ICRC promotes respect for international humanitarian law in the treatment of civilians and detainees, and helps those adversely affected by conflict and internal violence to survive and become self-sufficient. The ICRC also improves water supply and sanitation, strengthens

health care for the wounded and sick (including victims of sexual violence), and reunites families in the DRC. The ICRC has been running a large operation in the country for decades, and supports the National Society in the areas of community health support, protection, first aid and safer access, humanitarian diplomacy, National Society development and resource mobilization, migration, restoring family links and security.

Coordination with other actors

The DRC Red Cross, in line with its auxiliary role, maintains close coordination with the public authorities. The Ministry of Health is the supervisory ministry of the National Society. Collaboration is in place through the technical offices of the Ministry of Health and other Government offices.

The DRC Red Cross also continues to develop partnerships with external actors. UNICEF supports the National Society in the DRC on assistance to victims of armed conflict in North Kivu. Norwegian Church Aid gives support on water, sanitation and hygiene, and sexual and gender-based violence in South Kivu, while Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance) funds routine immunization support activities in Kinshasa and Kwilu.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) data
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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