



BELARUS AND RUSSIA

2023 IFRC network multi-country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 15.9M**

Appeal number **MAA67004**

In support of the Belarus Red Cross and Russian Red Cross



242

National Society branches



919

National Society staff



66,156

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



2.5M

Ongoing emergency operations



105,000

Climate and environment



6.6M

Disasters and crises



300,000

Health and wellbeing



2M

Migration and displacement



150,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Emergency response

- population movement

Longer term needs

- disaster preparedness and response
 - health and social care

Capacity development

- multi-stakeholder engagement
 - strategic planning
 - volunteer development

Population

Belarus

9.3M

Russia

143.4M

Hazards



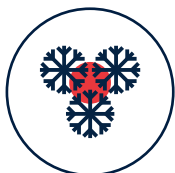
Conflict



Population movement



Floods



Extreme winters



Wildfires

Funding requirements

Total 15.9M CHF

Through the IFRC

12.7M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

→ **195,000** CHF

Host National Society

→ **3M** CHF

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

145,000 CHF
Climate and environment

6.5M CHF
Disasters and crises

1.8M CHF
Health and wellbeing

1M CHF
Migration and displacement

1M CHF
Values, power and inclusion

2.3M CHF
Enabling local actors

Ongoing emergencies

MGR65002

Part of the Ukraine and impacted countries crisis

Participating National Societies

Austrian Red Cross

Belgian Red Cross*

British Red Cross*

Red Cross Society of China

Danish Red Cross*

Finnish Red Cross*

German Red Cross

Italian Red Cross*

Japanese Red Cross Society*

The Netherlands Red Cross*

New Zealand Red Cross*

Norwegian Red Cross

The Russian Red Cross Society

Singapore Red Cross Society*

Spanish Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross*

Swiss Red Cross

Turkish Red Crescent Society

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILES

The **Belarus Red Cross** was established in 1921 and is the biggest humanitarian organization in Belarus. It has its headquarters in Minsk, eight regional branches and 158 branches across every district of the country. The National Society's auxiliary role to the public authorities is regulated by the Law on Belarus Red Cross 2000, last modified in 2020.

The Belarus Red Cross Strategy 2022–2026 identifies the following priority areas of work:

- The dissemination of knowledge about international humanitarian law and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- Medical and social care
- Emergency and crisis preparedness and response
- Volunteer development
- Organizational development

With an average annual turnover of about US\$5.5 million, the Belarus Red Cross supports at least 250,000 vulnerable people each year.

In 2021–2022, the Belarus Red Cross activities and priorities were influenced by the existing challenges of the continued COVID-19 pandemic and the migration crisis at the border between Belarus and Poland. In March 2022, the National Society was recognized by the local authorities as the main coordinator of the provision of humanitarian support to migrants in Belarus.

The Belarus Red Cross is continuing to expand its services. In June 2022, the National Society's third crisis centre was opened in Brest, in addition to those that already exist in Gomel and Grodno. These centres provide support to migrants, people who have survived violence or human trafficking, and other vulnerable people. The National Society is introducing sports events and rehabilitation exercises for older people to increase their social involvement in communities. Two branches offer sewing workshops and help is available for laundry. The activities will be expanded in the coming years.

The Russian Red Cross has been active since 1867 and it is one of the oldest non-governmental organizations in Russia. The law on the Russian Red Cross has been developed and will be approved by the end of 2022. The Russian Red Cross covers almost all regions of the

country, and branches differ significantly in their capabilities, coverage, range of services and efficiency. The size of the regions is comparable with large European countries, necessitating substantial response capacities and extended geographic reach.

The main areas of work of the Russian Red Cross are support in emergencies, health and social programmes, first aid training, and the promotion of blood and bone marrow donation. The National Society is one of the main coordinators of humanitarian support provided to people who have left Ukraine and are currently in Russian territory.

The Russian Red Cross places a strong focus on supporting vulnerable and marginalized groups in Russia. Social programmes include facilitating nurse visits for older people and people living with disabilities, home care, and the provision of care services in social and medical institutions by trained nurses and social workers. Health programmes include support for people with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, including commitments to treatment and support groups for patients.

The Russian Red Cross development strategy to 2026 is under draft, with 11 strategic priorities identified so far:

- Preventing and alleviating human suffering by providing a fully impartial service without discrimination based on nationality, race, gender, class affiliation, language, religion, ideology, political visions or social status
- Supporting safer and healthier lives, particularly for the most vulnerable groups – protecting their physical and mental health and improving the quality of their lives
- Contributing to ensuring dignity
- Disseminating humanitarian values in society on national and international levels, based on the principles of international law, charity, philanthropy and peace, including advocacy for humanitarian values
- Strengthening peace, friendship and compliance among nations and preventing social, national and religious conflicts
- Contributing to restoring family links programmes for people separated by war, armed conflict, disasters and other emergencies

- Providing assistance to the state authorities while abiding by the rules of humanitarian law and protecting the emblem of the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Crystal on the territory of the Russian Federation
- Contributing to the preservation of historical memory and protecting traditional humane values
- Improving the preparedness of the Russian Federation's population to various emergencies
- Saving lives and restoring life-sustaining activities after emergencies and crisis situations, and other support to disaster recovery, including on the international level, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and additional protocols
- Strengthening the role of the family in society, and protecting parenthood and childhood

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

Belarus

The Belarusian economy remains highly vulnerable and depends on trade relations with neighbouring countries, especially Russia, which is the largest trading partner. In 2020–2022, despite being in the top 20 European countries with the highest COVID-19 incidence, Belarus has not introduced any lockdown measures. However, many private businesses had to stop their activities and some enterprises reduced production, which led to increasing unemployment and loss of incomes. Fifty per cent of the population faced reduced incomes, especially those with a monthly income below CHF220.

After 2020, the Belarusian economy became even more vulnerable than in previous years due to COVID-19, mass actions, and deteriorating relations between Belarus and the EU, which implemented sanctions on key enterprises after the country's presidential elections in August 2020. In May 2021, after an incident where a Ryanair flight landed in Minsk, Belarusian Airlines was banned from flying over the EU or using its airports. With the Ukrainian crisis, additional sanctions were applied, including disconnecting several banks from the SWIFT system.

The most vulnerable groups in Belarus include older people, people living with disabilities, single-parent families and those with many children or dependents, people living in rural areas, people living with diseases and others living with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Migrants and refugees are among the biggest vulnerable groups to be supported by the Belarus Red Cross.

The social and demographic development of Belarus is characterized by a steadily ageing population. According

to the population census in 2019, the proportion of older people aged 65 and over was 15.2 per cent, compared with 13.8 per cent in 2010. The process is even faster in rural areas. According to demographic predictions, by 2030, the share of the older population will be more than one fifth of the population, or 21 per cent. A decrease in the birth rate and an increase in life expectancy (74.5 years in 2019) also contributes to the ageing processes.

According to the development plan of the Republic of Belarus until 2025, the main objectives are to:

- Increase the gross domestic product
- Strengthen people's health
- Increase life expectancy to 76.5 by 2025
- Increase real income of the population
- Increase investment to capital assets
- Increase the level of education and development of the financial market

As of 29 July 2022, 42,026 Ukrainian citizens had crossed the border into the Republic of Belarus, including 21,887 people through Poland, 3,625 people through Lithuania and 674 people through Latvia. The daily number of people crossing the border is 150–230, and about 800–1,000 in April 2022. The majority of people leaving Ukraine use Belarus as a transit country and continue on to the EU. According to the Ministry of Interior, 6,525 people registered, 2,203 applied for temporary residence and 1,000 people applied for permanent residence. People who stay in Belarus will require continuous support from the Belarus Red Cross.

Russia

With an area of 17 million km², the Russian Federation (Russia) is the world's largest country, stretching from the Baltic Sea in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east, and spanning 11 time zones. By land, Russia borders 14 countries: Poland, Lithuania, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia and North Korea. About two thirds of the country is bordered by the sea. Geographically, Russia can be divided in three vast regions: European Russia (stretching from Eastern Europe to the Ural Mountains), Siberia (from the Ural Mountains nearly all the way to the Pacific Ocean) and Russia's Far East. Vast territories are in the subarctic zone. The climate of Russia is diverse because its territory is so wide, although the majority of it has continental or moderate continental weather conditions.

The economic development is evolving as new technologies and areas of work have been introduced. The economy is shaped by urbanization, active migration, infrastructure development of the territories, and the reshaping of commercial and business chains. Some regions lost areas of work which were dynamic in the past, other regions have adapted to the modern economic situation, and a new industrial revolution has strengthened their positions. An 18 per cent inflation rate is predicted by the Bank of Russia by the end of 2022. Food prices in Russia have been rising faster than overall prices since March 2020, and even faster since March 2022, putting pressure on poor households. Between January and April 2022, prices rose by 11.67 per cent.

According to the Federal State Statistics Service, the population of Russia is 145 million people, which is the ninth highest population in the world. The demographic situation is characterized by a low birth rate, high mortality rate, an ageing population and positive

migration balance. In 2021, Russia ranked 52 in the Human Development Index.

The Federal State Statistics Service indicates that, in 2021, around 16.1 million people were below the poverty rate (11 per cent of the population). In 2022, this increased to 20.9 million people (14.3 per cent of the population). The average person who is below poverty rate is aged between 46 and 48, has secondary or unfinished higher education, a low-paid job which does not require special knowledge, and health issues caused by regular, low-quality alcohol consumption. The poverty rate is growing in rural areas. Vulnerable families which include older people, minors and people living with disabilities comprise 45 per cent of all vulnerable families. Vulnerable groups include older people, children, people living with disabilities, large families, single-parent families, people affected by various emergencies, people living in rural areas and people living with communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Russia has faced several crises in recent years. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic include the deterioration of health, COVID-19-related deaths, and a decrease in economic development. During the Ukrainian crisis, unprecedented sanctions have been applied to Russia, leading to a decrease in GDP, industrial manufacturing and trade. Many international companies have left Russia, which has contributed to an increase in unemployment, a worsening quality of life, an increase in social tension and a need for psycho-social support.

By 2 August 2022, more than three million people had arrived in Russia from Ukraine, of whom 998,000 are citizens of Russia and 482,000 are children. These people require immediate support.

Ongoing emergency response

For real-time information on emergencies, see IFRC GO pages [Belarus](#) and [Russian Federation](#)

The IFRC launched the Ukraine and impacted countries crisis [Emergency Appeal](#) in early 2022 to assist more than 3.6 million people affected by the armed conflict in Ukraine. Due to the changing needs in the region and the additional requests for support by other National Societies, the IFRC has been scaling up its response within Ukraine as well as in the neighbouring countries.

It is also revising the Emergency Appeal to include a total of 17 National Societies.

These now include the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, **Belarus Red Cross**, Bulgarian Red Cross, Croatian Red Cross, Estonian Red Cross, Red Cross Society of Georgia, Hellenic Red Cross, Hungarian Red Cross, Lithuanian Red Cross Society, Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova, Red Cross of Montenegro, Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia, Polish Red Cross,

Romanian Red Cross, **the Russian Red Cross**, Slovak Red Cross and Turkish Red Crescent Society, while coordinating with participating National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The

dynamic and protracted nature of the conflict and the ongoing displacement of people from Ukraine make it likely that additional National Societies will request IFRC support during the timeframe of implementation.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

Belarus

The country faces significant climate change-related threats. Temperatures, floods, droughts and precipitation have begun to diverge from historical patterns, and this will affect many sectors. Water, while abundant within Belarus, may deteriorate in quality due to increased flooding, extreme rain events, and changes in runoff patterns.

In a country almost 40.1 per cent covered by forest land, rising temperatures are likely to change ecosystem functions and forest composition, and some species of trees will suffer. Drought and increased temperatures could make forests more vulnerable to climate-related threats, such as disease outbreaks and forest fires. The most vulnerable sectors are agriculture, human health, forestry, water resources and energy.

Belarus is a member of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, so its legal base is being developed to find solutions to climate change issues. Between 2000 and 2020, the temperature in Belarus increased by 1.1oC – the warmest recorded years in the history of Belarus. Over the last 15 years, the amount of rainfall has decreased by two to six per cent. It usually decreases in the warm months of April, June and August and increases in the cold months of February, March and October. As a result, there are likely to be irrigation challenges. Belarus is a major agriculture manufacturer and, because of climate change, the crop season has expanded, but at the same time, harvests are becoming less sustainable.

Increased temperatures lead to a decrease in energy consumption in the winter, but an increase in the summer as more people use cooling systems. Heatwaves damage roads, and the rate of car accidents increases.

Every year Belarus faces cold waves, during which temperatures fall to -30oC and below. The most vulnerable people need additional support during these times.

In 2014, an [interactive map of high-impact weather events](#) was created as a result of a joint project of the

Belarus Red Cross and the Ministry of Emergencies. The map is a basis of early warning for cold waves, heatwaves, floods, forest fires and other climate-related events.

Russia

Russian territory is situated in several climate zones, including the Arctic, which is the most vulnerable to climate change. The climate is changing in Russia faster than the average country – between 1976 and 2019, the temperature increased in Russia by 0.47oC on average every 10 years. According to Greenpeace, that is 2.5 times faster than the increase of the global temperature within the same period.

2020 was the warmest year in Russia. The average temperature was 3.22oC above normal. In the same year, the second-lowest ever level of Arctic ice was reported.

Annual damage caused by climatic events in Russia reaches CHF465 to 930 million, and the damage caused by permafrost thaw could reach CHF2,320 million/year.

Every year, climate-related emergencies occur in Russia as a result of heatwaves, heavy rain, vast forest fires, floods and Arctic Sea ice loss. Several regions are more prone to forest fires (Krasnoyarsk Krai, Altai Krai, Zabaykalsky Krai, Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug, Republic of Yakutia (Saha), Khakassia, Irkutsk Oblast, Kurgan Oblast, Omsk Oblast and others), and other regions are vulnerable to floods (Krasnodar Krai, Republic of Yakutia, Republic of Buryatia, Pimorski Krai, Amur Oblast and Irkutsk Oblast). Other types of emergencies also occur.

Technological emergencies, emissions and the incorrect use of natural resources lead to ecological disasters – for example, oil leaks in Krasnoyarsk Krai, Komi Republic and Primorski Krai, 'black sky' air pollution events in Chelyabinsk, Kemerovo and the Novosibirsk region and Zabaykalsky Krai, and the severe chemical plant Ussolye-khim-prom ecological disaster in the Irkutsk region.

Vast parts of Russia are in the Arctic zone – Murmansk Oblast, Arkhangelsk Oblast, the autonomous oblasts of Nenetsk, Chukotsk, Yamalo-Nenetsk, the Republics

of Karelia, Komi, Saha (Yakutia) and Krasnoyarsk Krai. Some of the challenges in the Arctic zone include a decrease in biodiversity, increased risks of landslides and tsunamis, soil deformation, man-made activities, technological pollution, an increased demand for Arctic resources, difficulties in the provision of first aid or social services to the population due to severe climate, the huge distances involved, and a limited infrastructure. These challenges have negative humanitarian consequences, including limited access to drinking water, food and household items, forced migration, and changes in the way of life for northern populations.

Main actions and areas of support

The IFRC and network partners will support the National Societies by training staff and volunteers on responses to climate and environmental crises. They will develop volunteer initiatives for involving communities in activities aimed at addressing climate and environmental crises, and raise awareness of climate-related risk situations, and the development and use of messages on social media.

In Belarus, the IFRC, the National Society and its partners will support an increase in preparedness, and train disaster response teams on heat and cold waves. There will be an initiative to recycle poor-quality donated clothes, whereby the Belarus Red Cross will continue collecting clothes as humanitarian donations from the population and businesses. About 200 tonnes of used clothes are generated every year in Belarus, and 60 per cent of them cannot be used or donated to vulnerable people; the National Society collects used clothes and footwear in special containers installed throughout the country, and plans to pilot a project for recycling them.

Disasters and crises

Belarus

Recent trends in evolving disasters and crises in Belarus show that natural hazards are increasing in number and scale. The causes include climate change, a growing population, the risk of technological disasters (which can be caused by economic crises), population movement, and social emergencies, including armed conflict.

The most common natural hazards are droughts, floods, hailstorms, snowstorms and windstorms. In addition, forest fires can be dangerous – the country has more than eight million hectares of forests and 2.5 million hectares of peatlands. There are also 850km of dams and barrages which present hydrodynamic threats – the

increased risk of dams bursting has been reported in the Brest and Gomel regions.

Technological hazards are particularly concerning in Belarus and include:

- **Chemical threats** – there are several chemical and oil refinery plants in Belarus, and chemical substances are transported by vehicles and trains
- **Radiological or nuclear threats** – there is a nuclear power station in the territory of Belarus (Ostrovets), and nuclear power stations in the neighbouring countries of Lithuania (in Ignalina, 7km from the border), Russia (in Smolensk, 70km from the border) and Ukraine (in Chernobyl, 10 km from the border, Rovno, which is 140km away, and Zaporizhzhia in southeastern Ukraine).
- **Fire and explosion threats** – there are warehouses and bases containing explosive substances

Russia

The Russian Federation's population and economy are exposed to the risks of earthquakes and floods, and nearly 75 per cent of the population live in urban environments. The average number of people affected by earthquakes each year is about 200,000, and the average impact this has on GDP is about one billion US dollars.

Natural, ecological and technological hazards lead to population movement, disease outbreaks, and damage to property and livelihoods. There is therefore a growing need for first aid, humanitarian relief items, psychosocial support, medical treatment, the restoration of livelihoods and resilience development.

The potential threats are complicated because the population is so spread out across Russian territory – villages and cities are dispersed and, in many cases, access to them is challenging. Often social, medical and humanitarian services in emergencies are limited in these areas.

Analysis over the last 10 years predicts that natural and technological disasters will increase, causing economic shocks and affecting vast numbers of people.

Main actions and areas of support

Both National Societies have a strong response capacity and an auxiliary role recognized by the authorities; however, the growing number of disasters and crises requires further overall disaster management capacity. The authorities see the value of the National Societies for support in specific fields, although there also needs

to be a more holistic approach to the provision of services. The Ministry of Emergency Situations of Belarus is interested in the IFRC's tools for international disaster response and for psychosocial support for the Centre of Psychology in Minsk.

The IFRC and network partners will support the National Societies with the following actions:

- Ensuring at-risk communities share and receive actionable risk information and are supported to take active steps to reduce their vulnerability and exposure to hazards – this includes support with translation, adaptation and development of relevant materials to be disseminated in communities
- Training National Societies in scaling up community-led disaster risk reduction activities in urban and rural areas, including IFRC enhanced [vulnerability and capacity assessments](#), and developing and implementing community plans of action for disaster risk reduction and resilience
- Training community disaster management committees on developing and implementing community plans of action for disaster risk reduction and resilience
- Supporting the continued response to emergency situations, such as heatwaves and cold waves, floods, search and rescue and population movement
- Strengthening the National Societies' capacities for cash and voucher assistance in emergency response situations, and sharing best practices
- Strengthening the capacity of the National Societies to provide in-kind assistance as part of emergency responses
- Ensuring psychosocial support services are included into emergency responses
- Conducting assessments in National Society [Preparedness for Effective Response \(PER\)](#), developing a plan for strengthening their disaster management capacities and providing technical support
- **Belarus:** Ensuring the provision of first aid during mass actions and raising public awareness of first aid and actions during emergencies
- **Belarus:** Improving the capacity of disaster response teams using training, vehicles, uniforms and relevant equipment, and cooperating with the local authorities and international agencies to increase expertise and training

- **Russia:** In each federal region of Russia, setting up humanitarian hubs and warehouses of at least 100m² each; appointing coordinators to disaster response teams, training disaster response teams and providing relevant equipment

Health and wellbeing

Belarus

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Belarus is at a concentrated stage of an HIV/AIDS epidemic. The infection is disseminated mainly among the main population groups with a high infection risk. According to UNAIDS in 2019, there were around 74,000–87,000 intravenous drug users in Belarus, and they account for 54 per cent of all new cases of HIV/AIDS and 46 per cent of deaths caused by HIV/AIDS. In 2024, the Global Fund on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will scale down its support in Belarus and will leave the country eventually. Thus, new sources of funding are essential to continue the current activities.

There has been some success in tackling tuberculosis, but Belarus is still at a stage where a drug-resistant type of the disease is prevailing. Further support is needed in screening the most vulnerable groups, which are homeless people, ex-offenders, people living with HIV/AIDS and those who were in contact with tuberculosis patients.

An ageing population is another challenge for Belarus. The proportion of people older than 60 is about 22 per cent of the population, and it is expected that, by 2038, that number will reach 29 per cent. According to the World Bank, the number of people who depend on external support will increase from 592,000 in 2020 to 692,000 in 2038. The state provides long-term care, but the scale of this is lower than in other countries. In the majority of cases, care is carried out by family members, mainly women. As the population gets older, the amount of cancer cases, diabetes, circulatory diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, vision and hearing disorders, dementia and other diseases is increasing. About 80 per cent of older people have several chronic diseases.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, Belarus is experiencing an epidemic of non-communicable diseases. These are responsible for 89 per cent of all deaths in the country. The likelihood of dying prematurely between the age of 30 and 70 from non-communicable diseases in Belarus is 29 per cent, with the chances of a premature death for men (38 per cent) twice as high as they are for women (15 per cent). Cardio-vascular diseases cause 63 per cent of deaths.

The majority of cases of disability are also caused by non-communicable diseases.

COVID-19 is still spreading in Belarus, and the population is actively encouraged to get vaccinated. As of August 2022, about 67 per cent of people were vaccinated with the first vaccine and around 12 per cent had already received a booster vaccine. Simultaneously, monkey pox is developing. No cases had been reported in Belarus by August 2022, but cases had been confirmed in the neighbouring countries of Latvia, Poland and Russia.

Developing crises negatively affect the mental health of individuals, families and communities. Non-government organizations in Belarus are likely to further enhance existing services provided by the state, as they are able to access remote areas and, in some cases, are more trusted by communities.

Russia

Russia is characterized by health inequalities. This is the result of acute economic inequality and a lack of access to a wide range of social and medical services for people on low incomes.

Communicable diseases are spreading, in particular HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. The number of newly diagnosed cases of HIV in Russia has almost doubled over the last 10 years, although this is in part related to the increased number of tests conducted. In 2021, there were 1.1 million people with HIV/AIDS in Russia, and the number of people infected per 100,000 is 10 times higher in Russia than in EU countries.

Over the last 10 years, the rate of morbidity and deaths from tuberculosis has been decreasing. In 2021, the WHO excluded Russia from the list of countries with a high tuberculosis burden – to maintain this, prevention activities and regular awareness raising activities are vital.

The number of new COVID-19 cases is growing. At the beginning of August 2022, the daily number of newly diagnosed cases was 17,000, and the number of hospitalized patients was also growing.

Another trend is the ageing of the country's population. In 2020, a quarter of the population was above 65 years old but, by 2060, this number is predicted to grow to 47 per cent. This creates a need for a distinct set of social and medical services: for example, the development of visiting nurse services to care for older people, the

creation of centres for older people where leisure, educational and rehabilitation activities are organized, and the integration of older people in society.

Main actions and areas of support

The Belarus Red Cross will continue to develop its existing services in 2023. It has created a three-level system of training in first aid, to ensure that people have access to first aid courses. In August 2022, there was one first aid master trainer, 14 trainers and 182 instructors in all regions, and a training centre in every regional branch. More than 20,000 people are trained in first aid each year.

The medical-social service of the Belarus Red Cross provides long-term home care services, including medical assistance, social support and personal care to people with limited ability to move and look after themselves. About 200 nurses in the Belarus Red Cross provide medical-social services and palliative care to more than 1,300 people every year.

The Belarus Red Cross is included in the national plan on vaccination against COVID-19 as a co-implementor of several activities. With the support of the IFRC and the Swiss Red Cross, about 23,000 older people from remote rural areas were transported to vaccination centres between February 2021 and August 2022. Five thousand people were vaccinated outside medical institutions and 1,650 homeless people and ex-prisoners were vaccinated.

Psychosocial support remains one of the National Society's priorities, both as an ongoing activity and in emergencies. There is one psychosocial support specialist in the National Society's headquarters and 15 trained staff in the branches.

The Russian Red Cross considers training the population in first aid a mitigation measure, and it is one of its main areas of work. Its priorities include risk reduction and developing resilience in communities, promoting science-based approaches to first aid, and ensuring the financial sustainability of the Russian Red Cross. The regions bordering Ukraine (Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk, Voronezh, Rostov) are at high risk, so there may be a need for special mitigation measures to protect lives and meet the health needs of the population.

The IFRC and network partners will support the National Societies with the following actions:

Supporting health emergency preparedness and response

- Helping communities identify and reduce health risks, and ensuring that relevant knowledge and tools are in place, including Russian language guidelines, training and workshops
- Ensuring that proper strategies and tools in first aid are in place, training rapid response teams in first aid skills and training of trainers in disaster-prone regions
- Participation of the National Societies in the international expert group on first aid (Eastern European and Central Asian countries)
- Providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities such as migrants, displaced people, homeless people and ex-prisoners in accessing health services
- Ensuring that the National Societies receive timely training, methodological materials and best practices on hygiene services for vulnerable communities during pandemic response
- **Belarus:** The dissemination of information on communicable diseases which might lead to health emergencies – such as information materials, meetings with partners, training for instructors, training for the population, the development of consolidated standards in training and provision of first aid, the training of staff, volunteers and the wider population, participating in working meetings with the Ministry of Health, and procuring equipment for first aid training
- **Russia:** Developing video materials on health, the prevention of diseases and responses to outbreaks, first aid training in the regions bordering Ukraine, training of trainers, the creation of volunteer units in the regions bordering Ukraine, and training on emergency situation actions and first aid

Increasing the provision of mental health and psychosocial support

- Putting proper strategies and tools on mental health and psychosocial support in place
- Ensuring the participation of the National Societies in relevant training to increase understanding of psychosocial support provision
- Providing mental health and psychosocial support in emergency response, disaster and crises related programmes
- Introducing a caring for carers mechanism

- Introducing systems of psychosocial support
- Conducting experience exchange meetings, supervision and mentoring
- Giving psychosocial support training to volunteers working on the 201 telephone helpline
- Disseminating information to the population about stress and coping methods
- Strengthening the referral system on psychosocial support, including mapping of existing partners and services, exchanging contacts and information
- **Belarus:** Strengthening the system of psychosocial support, including the revision of training agendas, and the development of guidelines and instructions for staff and volunteers

Supporting the National Societies to contribute to immunization on a community level, by reaching inaccessible populations and extending health services to the most vulnerable people

- Raising awareness of COVID-19 vaccination, including meetings with partners, information materials, and meetings on information dissemination, visibility and training
- **Belarus:** Ensuring access of older people and people living with disabilities to COVID-19 vaccination, including recruitment, the training and motivation of volunteers, transport services, equipment, meetings with partners and humanitarian assistance

Increasing blood donations

- Sharing best practices in non-remunerated blood donation and facilitating the National Societies' participation in global campaigns for World Blood Donor Day

Belarus

- Recruiting, training and motivating volunteers to promote non-remunerated blood donation, disseminating information and motivating communities to donate blood
- Promotion of non-remunerated blood donation, including the creation of volunteer groups, working meetings with partners, training and equipment for volunteers, dissemination of information, and activities on donors' day and volunteers' day
- Developing and implementing a strategy on developing non-remunerated blood donation in cooperation with the state authorities, including working meetings, study visits and the analysis of experience



Belarus Red Cross

Russia

- Developing a blood donation system mobile app with information, services for donors, and systems of benefits for donors of blood and bone marrow
- The special recognition of people with 100 donations
- Building a programme of human leukocyte antigen-typing
- Organizing conferences and workshops with other National Societies, including the American Red Cross, German Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross

Supporting work on communicable and non-communicable diseases and healthy ageing

- Running campaigns and events for World AIDS Day and World Tuberculosis Day, with technical assistance and funding for initiatives
- Providing technical assistance and funding access to National Society initiatives on healthy ageing and non-communicable diseases
- Supporting the National Societies in developing and attracting funding for country-level projects on healthy and dignified ageing and healthy lifestyles

Belarus

- Using the IFRC's community-based health and first aid modules on prevention of non-communicable diseases and promotion of healthy lifestyles, and healthy ageing, to raise awareness in communities. This will include distributing information material, training of trainers, training in communities, support of mini-initiatives and an event dedicated to the International Day of Older Persons

- Developing a team approach to work while providing medical-social and palliative long-term home care, including meetings with partners, training, support to teams, recruitment and motivation of volunteers
- Further developing new efficient elements and forms of work in medical-social care and digitalizing services, including database modification, equipment and communication services
- Developing a needs assessment system for beneficiaries of medical and social services and the monitoring of satisfaction, through working meetings, an assessment system, staff training, surveys and workshops
- Expanding the coverage of beneficiaries with the medical-social services, through meetings with partners, advertising and information sharing, fundraising and training
- Developing integrated care in close cooperation with state health and social institutions
- Promoting integrated care, including raising awareness for people who make decisions, study visits, an international conference on integrated care, information materials, and work on legal acts and decisions

Russia

- Developing a system of support and motivation to treat HIV/AIDS patients through the provision of humanitarian assistance during treatment, including food, hygiene and information
- Developing a referral system for HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis patients to ensure they have all necessary services

- Developing centres for health and healthy ageing, with a special focus on rehabilitation after COVID-19 and psychosocial provision for older people in these centres
- Restoring visiting nurse activities, including courses for professional training and disseminating information in regional branches to recruit trainees
- Developing a digital platform to help people find a nurse, and marketing and promoting the platform

Promoting the health actions of the National Societies

- Engaging in relevant governmental coordinating committees, encouraging advocacy and policy dialogue with the main stakeholders
- **Russia:** Conducting a forum on the medical activities of the Russian Red Cross, and one on its social activities, together with the local authorities, partners and business communities

Migration and displacement

Belarus

According to the Department of Citizenship and Migration of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Belarus, refugee status was given to 978 people between 1997 and 2021. The majority of those were people from Afghanistan (642 people), Georgia (136 people) and Syria (38 people). Additionally, supplementary protection status was given to 280 people in 2021, including 251 citizens of Ukraine and people from Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Armenia and Turkey. Supplementary protection has been provided since 2009, and between 2009 and 2021, a total of 4,588 people received this status – with 93.2 per cent coming from Ukraine.

There are 5,985 stateless persons residing in Belarus. The majority of them do not have access to free medical services, social benefits or employment opportunities.

Since mid-2021, the number of migrants using Belarus as a transit zone to get to EU Member States increased. Between November 2021 and March 2022, about 2,500 people tried to cross the border between Belarus and Poland, which led to the organization of a camp, accommodating 800 people for several months. The majority of these people were assisted to return voluntarily to their home countries. However, border crossings continued to be reported in 2022.

Human trafficking remains one of the challenges for the citizens of Belarus, as the problem grows regionally and globally. Poor personal conditions, the economic and

political situation, social factors and lack of information lead to people being trafficked. In 2020, there were 1,251 criminal cases of human trafficking. The recruitment of minors online is increasing. The need to continue prevention work remains, especially in rural areas and small towns where people are more vulnerable to sexual and labour exploitation.

Russia

In Russia, migrants are often seen as a source of cheap labour for jobs that locals do not choose to engage in. According to estimates based on Ministry of Interior data, there are 3.5 million migrants in Russia — 18 per cent fewer than in pre-pandemic 2019 and 25 per cent more than in 2021. Ninety-one per cent of all labour migrants come from countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States, and 83 per cent of them are workers from the Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In 2019, the proportion of people from these countries was 72 per cent of the total volume of labour migration. Since 2019, the number of workers from Moldova and Ukraine has decreased by five times, the number of workers from Azerbaijan has halved, and there has been a 40 per cent reduction in people from Armenia. In the Central Asian states, migrants' remittances form a substantial contribution of GDP, and their departure helps to reduce unemployment at home. Migrants are often at risk of exploitation, as cheap labour and in human trafficking.

Since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, many migrants have returned to their homes within the Commonwealth of Independent States. This is because of the economic downturn, the closure of businesses and the lack of job opportunities. While there is no firm data on the number of Russians who have left the country since the start of the crisis, there is information that around 700,000 people left Russia after the mobilization started in September 2022.

Main actions and areas of support

Migration is one of the priorities of the **Belarus Red Cross** Strategy 2021–2026, and its migration policy is being developed. According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Belarus Red Cross, the State Border Committee and the Ministry of Interior, the Belarus Red Cross is a coordinator of humanitarian assistance provided to migrants in the country.

The Russian Red Cross is implementing projects on migration in several regions of Russia. It has been supporting migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

The IFRC and network partners will support the National Societies with the following actions:

- Strengthening existing humanitarian service points for migrants, including displaced people, by maintaining and equipping warehouses, and raising humanitarian assistance from Movement partners
- Strengthening a case-management approach to ensure migrants can access essential public services
- Supporting the National Societies to develop a migration strategy and policy
- Providing support in advocacy, services and activities for migrants and displaced people
- Ensuring training, guidance and access to knowledge (preferably in Russian language) about the work of National Societies in supporting migrant communities

Belarus

- Creating and supporting crisis centres for migrants in Vitebsk and Minsk
- Carrying out prevention activities on human trafficking in all regions of Belarus, including raising awareness for local authorities and vulnerable people using lectures, information events and volunteer initiatives
- Creating information and support centres in Minsk city and the Minsk region to support the victims of human trafficking
- Training volunteers in the prevention of sexual exploitation of minors online, and the prevention of human trafficking in the COVID-19 pandemic and on activated migratory trails
- Advocating for an improved legal base in Belarus to ensure that migrants have access to services and relief support
- Advocating for the inclusion of a migrant category in the presidential decree on the usage of gratuitous aid
- Including the Belarus Red Cross as a main coordinator of assistance provided to migrants in the plan developed by the Ministry of Interior – incorporating the reception and placement of foreign citizens and stateless persons in the case of mass arrivals in Belarus

- Strengthening cooperation with the local authorities involved in combatting human trafficking
- Decreasing the level of stigma and discrimination towards survivors of human trafficking through advocacy, dissemination of information and training for mass media representatives

Russia

- Ensuring that migrants have access to medical services, including the provision of medical insurance, case management and support during medical check-ups
- Case management during the legalization of the status of migrants in the country, and the provision of humanitarian assistance based on individual requests
- Providing humanitarian assistance to migrants, including food assistance, pharmacy vouchers and retail network vouchers
- Expanding access to education for migrants
- Encouraging the social integration of migrants, including activities for children of migrants and refugees
- Organizing a public counselling office for migrants

Values, power and inclusion

Belarus and Russia share the same challenges and trends. Older people, people living with disabilities, ex-prisoners, homeless people and migrants have difficulties in gaining access to education, social services and employment, and need support with integrating into communities. Women, girls, older people and people living with disabilities are at increased risk of gender-based and sexual violence, including domestic violence. People who are in difficult situations need support in understanding their rights, getting access to services and social benefits and in mentoring. Children of migrants might experience difficulties in accessing education because of a lack of documents or a lack of local language knowledge.

Communities are a good source of volunteers, knowledge, information and support. People are willing to donate their time and skills to NGOs and become volunteers. However, the large number of NGOs that need volunteers leads to high competition and the need for strong volunteer management and support. In both Belarus and Russia, volunteering is considered a good practice and an important social service at a state level.

Main actions and areas of support

Both the Belarus Red Cross and the Russian Red Cross contribute to the alleviation of human suffering, improving the quality of life and the health of those who find themselves in difficult situations. They promptly respond to requests for help, especially from marginalized community members, including youth, people living with disabilities, migrants and the elderly. Both National Societies manage social services programmes, with many of the services being supported and run with the help of volunteers: for example, the Day Centre of the Red Cross in Grodno for children living with disabilities, and their families, in Belarus, and the Mercy Service of the Russian Red Cross. There is still a need to develop National Society policies and implement those that already exist.

The Belarus Red Cross has a policy on the prevention of sexual violence and a policy on child protection. One of the priorities for the Russian Red Cross is to involve people who share the Movement's values and its Fundamental Principles in its activities. It aims to attract new volunteers and provide better assistance to vulnerable people, improving the image of the organization and strengthening the Russian Red Cross in general.

The Russian Red Cross pays special attention to youth engagement. In 2022, it signed a partner agreement with the youth movement Bolshaya Peremena, which unites three million children aged 11 to 17. The National Society will develop a long-term educational programme to ensure the full involvement of young people in its activities.

The IFRC and network partners will support the National Societies in the following ways:

- Ensuring access to relevant information, guidelines and tools in Russian language on volunteering, protection and inclusion
- Establishing relevant feedback mechanisms
- Identifying trusted communication channels for different types of communities
- Identifying institutional gaps in integrating community engagement approaches
- Developing guidelines and scripts on community engagement and accountability

Belarus

- Creating and maintaining crisis centres in all regional branches
- Ensuring sustainable work in existing services, such as the Day Centre for children living with disabilities in Grodno, and Open Home, the centre for people with mental illnesses in Minsk
- Integrating services for ex-prisoners, including advocacy, meetings with the local authorities and stakeholders, training for staff and volunteers, case management, family support and the dissemination of information

Russia

- Creating a platform for youth engagement and developing a project with the leaders of Bolshaya Peremena
- Organizing a social media campaign and creation of video content to engage young people
- Participating in regional and federal youth activities to increase knowledge about the National Society and engage youth in first aid activities

Enabling local actors

Both National Societies are committed to their institutional development and have carried out the self-assessment part of the IFRC [Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification](#) (OCAC) process. The Belarus Red Cross has completed it twice in 2012 and 2021, and the Russian Red Cross completed it in 2013. The self-assessment part of the process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The Russian Red Cross is

also committed to the IFRC [Preparedness for Effective Response](#) (PER) process and is at the orientation phase. This approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyze the strengths and gaps of their preparedness and response mechanism, and ultimately take necessary action to improve it.

The IFRC and network partners stand ready to further support the National Societies in their development.

Engaged

The Belarus Red Cross and the Russian Red Cross strive to strengthen their engagement with partners within and outside the network, building collective momentum towards resolving challenges affecting their communities. They work towards building strong public profiles, to be trusted as advocates, and affecting policy change at domestic, regional and global levels. They are keen to undertake digital transformation, overcoming digital divides, and using data more effectively to enhance accountability within operations.

Accountable

The Belarus Red Cross and the Russian Red Cross maintain a continued commitment to gender, diversity and inclusion, and work to promote a culture of inclusion with both institutional and operational levels. They aim

to develop stronger financing architecture and pursue increased financial resources for the benefit of National Societies, through mechanisms such as the Capacity Building Fund, the Empress Shōken Fund, and other innovative approaches to funding National Society development.

Trusted

The National Societies seek to ensure that they are equipped to undertake strategic planning, implementation and branch coordination. They identify volunteering development and youth action as critical catalysts of behaviour change and local action. The National Societies will work continuously towards strengthening community trust as the partner of choice for local humanitarian action.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC is present in Belarus and Russia. It supports the National Societies with strategic and operational coordination, humanitarian diplomacy and National Society development. In recent years, the Belarus Red Cross and the Russian Red Cross received support through a number of IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeal operations. These included population movement, floods and extreme winter in [Belarus](#), and floods, wildfires, violent attacks and population movement in [Russia](#). The IFRC also provides technical support to the National Societies on a broad range of services, including disaster response, health, social inclusion and migration.

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, of links with development assistance, and of efforts to reinforce

National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

Several participating National Societies provide long-term support to the Belarus Red Cross and the Russian Red Cross:

The **Belarus Red Cross** has partnerships with the Austrian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Latvian Red Cross, Lithuanian Red Cross Society, Norwegian Red Cross, Polish Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross and Turkish Red Crescent Society. The partnerships with defined areas of collaboration include:

- **The German Red Cross** supports the response to the population movement emergency operation
- **The Norwegian Red Cross** works on twinning cooperation with two branches: disaster response, volunteering, experience exchange, and supporting a centre for people with mental illnesses
- **The Russian Red Cross** supports joint programme development and experience exchange; this partnership is currently being updated and renewed, and new areas for cooperation will be identified, including capacity building, exchange of experience and joint emergencies response

- **The Swiss Red Cross** maintains a presence in Belarus and supports healthy and active ageing, the home-based care programme (including community mobilization and psychosocial support), and National Society development in the areas of resource mobilization and fundraising to promote sustainable Red Cross programming, including long-term fundraising strategy implementation
- **The Turkish Red Crescent Society** works in relief item donations (in 2021) and experience exchange

The **Russian Red Cross** is discussing areas of possible cooperation with the Swedish Red Cross and the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and has long-term and fruitful partnerships with:

- **The Austrian Red Cross**, which supports refugees from Ukraine in Russian territory and the strengthening of the Russian Red Cross's capacity
- **The Red Cross Society of China** has contributed (along with the Italian Red Cross) to the School for Migrant Children in the Russian Red Cross headquarters, and it also supports disaster preparedness
- **The German Red Cross** is providing support to some branches, supporting refugees from Ukraine in Russian territory, and working on strengthening of the Russian Red Cross's capacity
- **The Italian Red Cross** has become a close partner of the Russian Red Cross, especially in supporting the most vulnerable categories of migrants: improvement of the socio-legal condition of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers at risk of human trafficking in Russia
- **The Norwegian Red Cross** supports humanitarian programmes in four branches in the northwest region of Russia, in the social protection of children, rehabilitation of under-age girls, and emergency preparedness and response in Murmansk. Since 2019, the Russian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and the IFRC have been building a fundraising programme for the branches in the northwest region
- **The Spanish Red Cross** supports refugees from Ukraine in Russian territory and supports the strengthening of the Russian Red Cross's capacity
- **The Swiss Red Cross** contributes through the IFRC Emergency Appeal on Ukraine and neighbouring countries
- **The Turkish Red Crescent Society** signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2019, which covers a wide range of areas including joint humanitarian aid, disaster response, social welfare and health; it has supported the Tracing and Information Centre of the Russian Red Cross, as well as resource mobilization activities

Movement coordination

Movement coordination including both National Societies, the IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is regulated by signed agreements which are renewed according to evolving situations. The Movement coordination agreements in Belarus and Russia define respective roles and responsibilities, and provide a solid base for overall coordination. The Belarus Red Cross and the Russian Red Cross ensure Movement coordination in the case of disasters. The Movement coordination mechanisms function at the leadership

level through regular tripartite meetings between the National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. Functional meetings involve participating National Societies. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

The ICRC is present in both Belarus and Russia and supports the National Societies on first aid development, restoring family links, international humanitarian law, disaster management and response.

Coordination with other actors

The Belarus Red Cross has a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus, according to which the Belarus Red Cross assumes the role of an auxiliary to the public authorities in disaster preparedness and relief. Disaster response teams of the Belarus Red Cross are included in the state emergency response plan at district and regional levels. Its staff are part of emergency response commissions.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Belarus Red Cross, the State Border Committee and the Ministry of Interior, the Belarus Red

Cross is a coordinator of humanitarian assistance provided to migrants in the country.

The Russian Red Cross and Russian Emergency Ministry's current framework cooperation agreement is under review. The process is preceded by agreements that are reviewed and renewed at a regional level. The Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Russian Federation is fully responsible for organizing response operations during any emergency or crisis and has a large personnel base and budget. The Russian Red Cross is in a position to complement this response through preparedness and recovery interventions.

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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