



# SOUTH AFRICA

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 11.1M**

Appeal number **MAAZA003**

## In support of the South African Red Cross Society



**42**

National Society branches



**271**

National Society staff



**5,098**

National Society volunteers

## People to be reached



**250,000**

Ongoing emergency operations



**7M**

Climate and environment



**5M**

Disasters and crises



**6M**

Health and wellbeing



**1M**

Migration and displacement



**1M**

Values, power and inclusion

## IFRC network multiyear focus

### Emergency response

- Floods and landslides

### Longer term needs

- Disaster risk reduction • Health and care
  - Community resilience
- Protection, gender and inclusion

### Capacity development

- Humanitarian diplomacy
- Digital transformation • Financial sustainability
- Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
  - Youth and volunteer development

## Key country data

**Population** **60M**

**Long-term Climate Risk Index** **78**

**Human Development Index rank** **109**

**Population below poverty level** **55.5%**

## Hazards



Floods



Landslides



Tropical storms



Violence



Civil unrest



Disease

## Funding requirements

**Total 11.1M** CHF

Through the IFRC

**8.8M** CHF

Through Participating National Societies

→ **300,000** CHF

Host National Society

→ **2M** CHF

### IFRC Breakdown

**7M** CHF

Ongoing emergency operations

### Longer term needs

**350,000** CHF

Climate and environment

**500,000** CHF

Disasters and crises

**400,000** CHF

Health and wellbeing

**250,000** CHF

Migration and displacement

**150,000** CHF

Values, power and inclusion

**180,000** CHF

Enabling local actors

## Ongoing emergencies

**MDRZA012**

South Africa Floods and landslides  
**Floods**

### Participating National Societies

American Red Cross\*

Belgian Red Cross

British Red Cross

The Canadian Red Cross Society\*

German Red Cross\*

Japanese Red Cross Society\*

Red Cross of Monaco\*

The Netherlands Red Cross\*



# NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

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**The South African Red Cross Society** was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1919. It was established in 1921 by the Parliament of South Africa as a voluntary humanitarian relief and development organization, and an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. The National Society's goal is to alleviate human suffering and assist people in need. The South African Red Cross is a key partner of the Government of South Africa, in times of peace and crisis, and seeks to complement the Government's efforts by executing its auxiliary role to address humanitarian needs and issues in South Africa.

The National Society is known for the capacities of its first responders, who act in coordination with the Government's disaster management committee. As a result, the South African Red Cross has earned the trust of the communities it works with, enabling its continued access to and ability to reach vulnerable

groups. In 2021 and 2022, the National Society simultaneously responded at scale to the COVID-19 pandemic, urban violence and devastating floods and landslides. It works with local authorities and other humanitarian partners in line with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, paying special attention to the neutrality, impartiality, independence and sustainability of its interventions.

The South African Red Cross operates 42 branches across the nine provinces of South Africa, with a database of 5,098 volunteers and 271 staff members. The Secretary General's office is supported by a senior management team comprising managers from different departments, including disaster management, health and care, branch development, finance and organizational development. The team supports its decentralized provincial and branch offices with the implementation of activities and community engagements.

## IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

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### Joint situational analysis

The Republic of South Africa, located in the southernmost part of Africa, shares its borders with Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Eswatini and Lesotho (which is landlocked and encircled by South African territory). South Africa's extensive coastline is approximately 3,000 kilometres long, stretching from the Mozambique border in the east to the Namibian border in the west. The Indian Ocean lies on the eastern coast of South Africa and the Atlantic Ocean on the western coast, and the two oceans meet at the country's southernmost point, Cape Agulhus. South Africa's land area totals 1.2 million sq. km, and its population was estimated to be 61 million by the end of October 2022. South Africa is the most important destination country for migrants in Africa – the number of international migrants there increased from approximately 2 million in 2010 to more than 4 million in 2019, dropping to 2.9 million by mid-2020.

Between 2019 and 2021, South Africa underwent political changes and made reforms to the civil service, but achieved disappointing levels of socio-economic development. The 2019 elections

confirmed public support for the incumbent President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was inaugurated in 2018 after former President Jacob Zuma resigned prematurely. After the end of apartheid, the country's democracy benefitted from strong and credible institutions for a significant period of time – however, much of their capacity and credibility was eroded over the course of the Zuma administration. Despite current efforts, the political recovery process may take many years.

The South African economy was already in a weak position prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, following a decade of low growth during which the economy expanded by an average of one per cent per year between 2012 and 2021. The devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal July 2022 and the ongoing energy crisis (where electrical supply load shedding occurred) contributed to the decline, weakening an already fragile national economy that had just recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The economy continues to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit more slowly than expected, with growth estimated at 1.9 per cent in 2022. Commodity prices remain important for South Africa, as it is a major net exporter of minerals and a net importer of oil.

Longstanding structural constraints such as electricity shortages continue to limit its economic progress, and inflation has increased to a 13-year high. Poverty has reached levels not seen for more than a decade, and sustained reforms and investments are required to support better growth outcomes and poverty reduction. Strengthening investment, including direct foreign investment, is critical to propelling growth and creating jobs. In South Africa, inequality is an impediment to inclusive growth and a more cohesive society.

The COVID-19 pandemic, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis continue to have an impact on the country's economy and contribute to unemployment – many small businesses closed down due to the economic shock of the pandemic.

South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Its ranking in the 2014–2015 Gini Index, which measures inequality in terms of consumption per capita, reached 63 – the highest among countries with available data. Inequality in South Africa is widespread and persistent, and has been increasing since 1994. Wide income polarization in the country is underpinned by high levels of structural inequality of opportunity, and this is reflected in income being unfairly distributed across a small number of high earners, a relatively small middle-class, and a large low-earning group. Unemployment rates have hovered around 25–26 per cent over the last decade, following a moderate but increasing trend that affects more than a third of the workforce. For young people, labour market success represents a particularly steep challenge, with the 15–24 and 25–34 age groups facing unemployment rates of 61 and 41 per cent respectively.

There are many humanitarian challenges in South Africa. According to the IPC 2021 food insecurity classification report, South Africa's deteriorating food security is mainly driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, high food prices, droughts and economic decline.

South Africa is vulnerable to a range of natural hazards, and is also experiencing the adverse impacts of climate change, with droughts and floods affecting most of its provinces. Violence remains at a high level and can lead to civil unrest, while disasters often lead to a significant loss of lives, injuries and damage to livelihoods and infrastructure. Flooding in 2022 disrupted operations at one of Africa's busiest ports in Durban. The KwaZulu-Natal provincial Government estimated that billions of rand worth of damage was caused to property and infrastructure, after the heavy rains unleashed "untold havoc".

A recent survey by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition stated that the floods affected 31,220 jobs, 68 per cent of which were in the metropolitan municipality of eThekweni. The manufacturing sector has also been badly affected, with temporary closures leaving an estimated 30,000 employees out of work and without pay for at least three months. The devastating flooding disaster in KwaZulu-Natal came at a time when South Africa was already struggling with high unemployment and soaring inflation, and it brought into sharp focus the material threat posed by extreme weather events and climate change. Rapid urbanization has seen informal settlements grow continuously in number and size, and a quarter of the city's population now live in informal settlements and unplanned dwellings built on vacant land with poor-quality materials. In addition, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health has warned about the soaring number of new COVID-19 cases.

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## Ongoing emergency response

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

- Appeal number [MDRZA012](#) South Africa KwaZulu-Natal Floods and landslides
- Appeal launch date: 21 April 2022
- Appeal end date: 31 October 2023
- People affected: 128,743
- People to be assisted: 37,000

## Short description of the emergency

In early April 2022, record-breaking rains inundated the region around the port city of Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. The floods that followed washed away infrastructure, land and houses and had a severe impact on livelihoods. 435 people lost their lives, 80 were reported missing, and a total of 19,113 households and 128,743 people were affected by the disaster. The rains persisted in the aftermath of the original floods, and part of KwaZulu-Natal experienced further flooding. People continued to be evacuated to safe areas, while more roads and houses were affected

by flood water. On 23 May, an orange level warning was issued for disruptive rain, floods and mudslides in the extreme north-eastern areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Six weeks later, thousands of people remained in evacuation shelters with an uncertain future.

On the night of 18 April 2022, the President of South Africa declared a national state of disaster, to maximize the national and provincial response to the flooding crisis. The impact of the disaster was not evenly distributed among local communities, with poorer regions experiencing the most severe consequences of the extreme weather. The hardest-hit areas were informal settlements built close to rivers, below flood levels or on steep hillsides in rural areas, with little or no infrastructure to protect them from the elements. Many of these houses are made of basic materials such as tin sheets, salvaged wood and mud. Rushing floodwaters collapsed riverbanks and hillsides, washing away homes and belongings. In addition, the rains and floods began at night when everyone was sleeping, making the event even more frightening and deadly. An estimated 5,704 houses were destroyed and 9,659 were damaged.

In the aftermath of the floods, 6,814 people were hosted in more than 50 evacuation shelters, mostly in eThekweni. The eThekweni municipality reported that most of its 1,152 formal businesses were affected by the flooding, while small-scale and commercial farmers suffered financial losses as a result of damage to crops and infrastructure. Other critical infrastructure, including major roads, transportation, water treatment and supply, communications and electrical systems were also affected, and this damage greatly hampered recovery and relief efforts. There was also extensive damage to community infrastructure – more than 600 schools were damaged and are currently closed, affecting 270,000 learners, while 66 public health care facilities were also affected.

Recovery from the impact of the floods continues to be a significant challenge for people in South Africa, particularly those who have lost family members, homes or livelihoods. The Government is working to identify suitable land to build new settlements on for displaced people who lost their homes, but in the meantime, thousands of people have been left homeless and are living in shelters across the province.

### Short description of the emergency operational strategy

The South African Red Cross initiated its response to the floods and landslides from the onset of the emergency. Due to the scale of the disaster, the National Society

requested an IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation to support its operation, which was granted on 19 April 2022. The severity of the humanitarian impact of the disaster necessitated the procurement of additional resources for the response, so on 21 April the IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal requesting CHF 8 million to support the South African Red Cross with scaling-up its response.

The National Society's operational strategy aims to support 37,000 people affected by the floods to meet their essential needs in a safe and dignified manner, recover from the crisis, and strengthen their resilience to future shocks. Based on detailed assessments and lessons learned from previous emergency responses, the priorities of the operation are defined as:

- Responding to immediate humanitarian needs by providing relief, and ensuring that affected people in operational areas are safe and their basic needs are met
- Assisting affected communities to stabilize their housing and advocate for the provision of safe shelter – this will complement ongoing and planned Government support
- Building community resilience through sustainable food security and livelihoods support

### Areas of emergency response by sector

#### Integrated household assistance, including household items, food and multi-purpose cash

- Provide relief assistance to 30,000 people in evacuation centres and communities through in-kind distributions of food, household and hygiene items, helping people to meet their essential needs
- Provide multi-purpose cash assistance to 6,000 households for a period of up to six months, enabling families to sustain their basic needs, restart their livelihoods and seek dignified shelter solutions when safe and appropriate

#### Health, psychosocial support and water, sanitation and hygiene

- Deliver community-based health services to reduce the immediate risks to people's health
- Provide psychosocial support to boost people's well-being
- Deliver water, sanitation and hygiene promotion services to 30,000 people, including the distribution of essential sanitation and hygiene materials

## Protection and prevention

- Encourage safe and equitable access to basic services by strengthening sexual and gender-based violence prevention, and considering different needs based on gender and other diversity factors
- Support people in affected communities to implement an informed, appropriate and safe approach to recovery, thereby reducing their exposure to future shocks
- Conduct detailed assessments for recovery and strengthening community resilience

The emergency response will be completed by the end of October 2023, after which remaining needs will be covered as part of longer-term programming of this country plan.

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## Strategic priorities

### Climate and environment

Like many other developing countries, South Africa is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Due to a combination of political, geographic and social factors, South Africa is recognized as a country that is sensitive to climate change, and is ranked 92 out of 181 countries in the 2020 ND-GAIN Index. South Africa is already exposed to a high degree of risk from natural hazards and disasters, including droughts, floods and storm-related events such as high winds, coastal storm surges and hail. These extreme weather events are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. Extreme rainfall has already resulted in costly infrastructure damage, road closures and reduced access to electricity, and it has also overwhelmed sewage and storm water systems, causing flooding and pollution.

Temperature anomalies are already affecting South Africa's critical infrastructure such as roads and rail lines. Rainfall and temperature changes will continue to have a negative impact on agriculture and food security, and extreme weather events may also affect tourism and, as a result, the livelihoods that depend on the sector. Past flooding has already contaminated water supplies. A reduction in rainfall and higher temperatures, including heatwaves, have led to significant water restrictions and increased demand for water and energy for cooling systems across all sectors. Extreme rainfall continues to erode the soil, degrade land, and put ecosystems and the services they provide at risk. Finally, increased sedimentation rates due to more intense rainfall can reduce the storage capacity of dams.

The adverse impacts of climate change are affecting most of the provinces in South Africa – most notably, the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and Western Cape, areas that have experienced some of the worst thunderstorms and floods in recent decades. Other areas across Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Western

Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo have experienced severe droughts, resulting in the decline of crop yields, and an increase in cases of malnutrition have been recorded in parts of Eastern Cape. Heatwaves and drought conditions are more severe than in previous years, and there have been frequent episodes of natural veld fires in Western Cape and parts of Northern Cape.

The [South Africa National Development Plan 2030](#) recognizes that the maintenance of ecosystems, particularly those providing food and clean water, regulating climate and disease, supporting crop pollination and nutrient cycles, and delivering cultural benefits such as recreational opportunities, are fundamental to achieving South Africa's social and economic development objectives.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment is responsible for the greening strategy in South Africa. The work takes place at a local Government level, in partnership with local Government institutions and non-governmental and community-based organizations. Greening activities are undertaken in line with chapter four of the National Forest Act of 1996 and the national greening strategy. In addition, the National Arbor Month campaign aims to sensitize South African communities to the need to conserve, protect and plant trees for environmental and humanitarian purposes. The department is responsible for the coordination of the National Arbor Month campaign, celebrated each year during September.

### Main actions and areas of support:

The South African Red Cross 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, and 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, 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 South African Red Cross is prepared to deliver urgent action to reduce and adapt to the rising and evolving risks from climate change and environmental hazards. To achieve this, it will ensure that its staff and volunteers have the knowledge and capacity to serve as agents of change and mobilize positive and large-scale action to address climate-related and environmental crises. The National Society will increase the capacity of communities to address the evolving impacts of climate change, and support them to take ownership of programmes addressing climate risks. It will also increase the ways by which community members can contribute their own insights, knowledge and ideas. The National Society will assist communities to catalyze climate change mitigation efforts and promote more sustainable environmental practices, while also reinforcing climate-related laws and policies.

As part of the IFRC's Pan-African Tree Planting and Care initiative, the National Society aims to plant trees across South Africa, raising community awareness on tree planting and care and enabling communities to plant and care for fruit trees. This work will curb the hunger situation and address climate-related challenges.

## Disasters and crises

South Africa is susceptible to a variety of natural and man-made hazards, including floods, landslides, tropical storms, storm surges, thunderstorms, civil unrest and urban violence. It is particularly prone to disasters and hazards that cause significant damage to infrastructure, cause the loss of human lives and livestock, and directly affect the economy. Rapid urbanization and climate change are increasing the intensity of these disasters.

The country was hit by nearly 300mm of rain in just over 24 hours during a ferocious storm on 11 April 2022. The storm became the deadliest weather event to affect South Africa in recent history, exceeding the amount of rainfall in a single day during previous disasters: the 1987 Durban floods brought an average of 225mm of rainfall in 24 hours and killed up to 500 people, while the 2019 floods reached 165mm rainfall in 24 hours and left at least 80 people dead.

South Africa has a well-established disaster management framework, which promotes engagement in disaster risk reduction in the three spheres of Government: national, provincial, and municipal. The Inter-Governmental Committee on Disaster Management, the National Disaster Management Advisory Forum and the National Disaster Management Centre are the institutions responsible for the overall coordination of disaster management across the country.

## Main actions and areas of support:

The South African Red Cross has responded to numerous disasters and crises in recent years, with support from the IFRC's DREF and Emergency Appeal modalities. It will continue to explore disaster risk reduction and mitigation interventions, while reducing vulnerability by mobilizing community-based adaptations and promoting indigenous knowledge systems.

The National Society will support communities to increase their resilience to evolving and multiple shocks and hazards, ensuring that at-risk communities receive actionable risk information and are supported to take active steps to reduce their vulnerability and exposure to hazards. The National Society will position itself to prepare for and respond to crises and disasters, and increase its capacity to analyze and address the needs of people affected by crises and disasters.

South Africa faces hunger and natural disasters that keep evolving. As a result, it is not possible to separate emergency, recovery, and longer-term programming and resilience building. The country's development pathway calls for a common approach that fosters resilience by bridging the gaps between humanitarian action, recovery and development. Basic needs provision saves lives, but it is also a means to recover and protect livelihoods and socio-economic security, following a people-centred approach that leaves no one behind. There is a need to ensure that poor households can effectively protect themselves, recover from crises and disasters, and grow their livelihoods through timely and scalable safety nets and social assistance. The National Society will be able to support households with this by scaling up cash and voucher assistance.

As part of the IFRC's Pan-African Zero Hunger initiative, and through efforts to increase climate-smart food production and balanced nutrition, the National Society will work with the IFRC, relevant governmental departments, UN agencies and other corporate organizations to invest in small-scale agricultural production. The National Society will also support communities and households to grow healthy food and consume a

diverse and nutritious diet through vegetable gardening, tree planting and climate-smart agricultural support.

The South African Red Cross will also focus on its own internal capacities to execute its auxiliary role. As part of the IFRC Pan-African Red Ready initiative, the National Society will ensure that its national disaster response team has the necessary skills to respond to disasters efficiently and effectively.

## Health and wellbeing

Measures of mortality rates indicate an improvement in life expectancy at birth – increasing from 61.7 years in 2021 to 62.8 years in 2022. However, South Africa has a high prevalence of tuberculosis, diabetes and HIV/AIDS, and the COVID-19 pandemic placed an additional burden on the health care system.

On 5 March 2020, South Africa recorded its first case of the COVID-19 virus. Just six days later, on 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that there was a global pandemic. South Africa's first COVID-19-related death occurred on 27 March 2020. To limit the spread of the virus, authorities proactively introduced a strict national lockdown, including an evening curfew, limiting the sale of certain items and banning alcohol sales to conserve hospital capacity.

In 2021, an estimated 13.7 per cent of the total population of South Africa were HIV/AIDS positive. Almost a quarter of South African women of reproductive age, aged between 15–49 years, are HIV/AIDS positive. HIV/AIDS prevalence among young people aged 15–24 has remained stable over time. The total number of people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa has increased from an estimated 3.8 million in 2002 to 8.2 million in 2021. The largest number of people enrolled on antiretroviral programmes in the world live in South Africa, so the Government was concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people living with HIV/AIDS, and on testing and treatment programmes. The National Department of Health and other stakeholders advocated for efforts to maintain the continuity of care for people living with HIV/AIDS, while simultaneously de-escalating other health services to tackle the spread of COVID-19. Despite such efforts, the supply of HIV/AIDS medicines was hampered by global lockdown measures and travel restrictions.

Recurring disasters exacerbate health vulnerabilities in South Africa. Following the 2022 floods and landslides, many displaced people could not get their medicines for chronic health conditions such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diabetes and hypertension. Many of these people

now struggle to access health care because of the scale of infrastructural damage and the challenges of daily survival. Due to the trauma experienced by affected families, and the distress caused by worrying about the loss of their assets, a number of people have needed psychosocial support.

Despite improved access to proper sanitation facilities, many households continue to be without them. There is a need to explore water quality and access to water across South Africa by improving sanitation facilities, promoting good hygiene practices, and implementing effective water management systems such as rainwater harvesting and home water treatments.

## Main actions and areas of support:

Throughout its COVID-19 response, the National Society has continually reached out to people in hard-to-reach communities with vaccination messaging and registration. This was done through the national vaccination campaign in which the National Society used community feedback mechanisms and media platforms such as radio stations, television, posters, flyers, WhatsApp messages and Facebook. Radio jingles broadcast on both national and local radio stations in different languages enabled the National Society to reach people with vaccination awareness messaging in both urban and rural areas. The National Society strengthened risk communication and community engagement across all provinces in every operational area, successfully addressing vaccination hesitancy in many places. It enhanced psychosocial support and water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives to enable people to cope with the stress and health risks that COVID-19 presented. The National Society also initiated vaccination advocacy to ensure vaccine equity, especially among undocumented people such as migrants and refugees.

A continent-wide initiative between the IFRC and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to invest in building resilient public health security infrastructure on the continent will reinforce the fight against COVID-19. Under the US\$39 million Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative funded by the Mastercard Foundation, the IFRC and African National Societies are building a programme to ensure that 60 per cent of African people vaccinate themselves against COVID-19. The partnership between the Mastercard Foundation and Africa CDC will support the procurement and delivery of tens of millions of COVID-19 vaccines and hasten economic recovery on the continent. Under this programme, the South African Red Cross will deliver critical risk communication and community engagement

activities to vulnerable communities in support of COVID-19 vaccine uptake. Other programme partners will provide procurement and logistics services to a central warehouse (UNICEF), in-country logistics (World Food Programme), managing COVID-19 vaccination centres (Amref Health Africa and GHSS) and safety surveillance (Akros).

For the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other disease epidemics in poor and vulnerable households, the South African Red Cross delivers prevention, response and treatment programmes in collaboration with the Government, community-based organizations and affected communities. Through the integrated HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis programme, the National Society reaches out to people infected and affected by these diseases, and the continuation of this programme will contribute to reducing high death rates.

Together with the IFRC, the National Society will work towards the 95-95-95 goal, which is to reduce new tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS by 95 per cent (as well as other sexually transmitted infections); reduce the number of new HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis infections by 95 per cent; and reduce the number of deaths due to these two diseases by 95 per cent. The National Society prioritizes health education as a key element of HIV/AIDS preventative measures, in line with the Government's national development plan. These activities include educating parents, young people and children about the reality of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, sexually-transmitted and other diseases, and the prevention of them. The South African Red Cross also aims to reduce the stigma and discrimination surrounding tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS by increasing access to health care for those in need and improving the care, treatment and prevention.

To improve access to affordable, appropriate and environmentally sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services, the National Society will scale up its health promotion and disease prevention activities. It aims to improve community knowledge and awareness of health and water, sanitation and hygiene issues among households, with the support of volunteers and community health workers. In addition, in collaboration with the department of social services, the National Society will support people's mental health and well-being by providing mental health and psychosocial support to communities during and after disasters.

## Migration and displacement

Across Southern Africa, migration is driven largely by the pursuit of economic opportunities, political instability

and, increasingly, environmental hazards. Because of its strong economic position in the continent, South Africa receives a high volume of migrants seeking work opportunities in the mining, manufacturing and agricultural sectors. It is the most industrialized economy in the region, and a particularly attractive destination for those in search of education and better opportunities. An estimated 2.9 million migrants resided in South Africa in the middle of 2020, and the migration phenomenon is shaping the country's demographic profile.

Global migration-related challenges are ever-evolving, and South Africa has experienced an increased prevalence of irregular migration, including women and unaccompanied minors. There are inadequate migration management policies and border management processes, along with rising xenophobic sentiments that, in some cases, turn into physical violence against migrants. Social unrest has increased significantly in recent years, with protest action and tensions between local citizens and foreign nationals, along with some reports of hostile takeovers of settlements and mining towns. The economic hardship faced by citizens, largely due to high unemployment, is one of the key drivers of social instability, particularly among young people. Groups like Operation Dudula pose a threat of social unrest, due to its targeting of undocumented foreign nationals across South Africa. Parts of Gauteng, in areas including Alexandra, Diepsloot, Johannesburg and Soweto, have seen incidents of social unrest connected to this group. This has caused instability in many migrant communities, and most migrants fear for their lives. During the recent floods in KwaZulu Natal, affected foreign nationals were hesitant to stay in community shelters for fear of intimidation.

There is a need for enhanced and harmonized assistance, migration management and protection policies to improve the lives and livelihoods of migrant populations.

### Main actions and areas of support:

The South African Red Cross seeks to strengthen its strategic priority on migration and displacement. To achieve this, it will collaborate with the IFRC, participating National Societies and the Government to respond to the migration challenges by supporting migrants with services such as restoring family links, mental health and psychosocial support and health care.

The National Society continues to improve the protection and care of separated and unaccompanied migrant children in South Africa. In partnership with UNICEF, the Department of Social Development and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC),

the National Society will provide emergency support to children and families who have migrated to South Africa from other countries. This vital support will include food, shelter, school supplies, psychosocial support and restoring family links services.

## Values, power and inclusion

Episodes of violence in South Africa can reach significant levels, presenting a major risk to people across the country. During the second week of July 2021, communities in South Africa experienced unprecedented levels of urban violence and the destruction of public and private properties. These acts of violence affected the areas surrounding KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, causing the deaths of 212 people and leading to the arrest of 2,554 perpetrators.

The riots and looting resulted in shortages of food, fuel and medical supplies, and the destruction of infrastructure. In addition, racial tensions became inflamed, disrupting South Africa's economy. Follow-up assessments with 5,200 households in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, conducted by the South African Red Cross in the first two weeks of August 2021, revealed that most of the affected households were inhabited by elderly people over the age of 70, either living alone or with children. Households headed by children were also among the most affected, especially where the sole breadwinner lost their job or livelihood due to the unrest.

South Africa has a history of exclusion and discrimination on the grounds of race and gender, among others. As a result, the Government has developed one of the most inclusive constitutions in the world, with a bill of rights that specifically refers to equal treatment for all regardless of race, age, disability, socio-economic status and gender. Other forms of legislation, such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998, have facilitated access to formal employment for women. As a result, employers are legally required to work towards more an equitable workforce representation based on gender, race and disability.

In 2017, a survey found that approximately 17 per cent of girls aged 12–19 years (who were not attending an educational institution) had become pregnant in the 12 months prior. KwaZulu-Natal had the highest proportion of these pregnancies, followed by Eastern Cape and Western Cape. While great strides have been made towards equality for women, many challenges remain and there is a need for continued measurement, policy changes and programmatic interventions. In addition to monitoring the country's progress towards equality between men and women, a deeper understanding

of gender gaps will progress the agenda of leaving no one behind.

Poverty levels are consistently highest among female-headed households, black South African communities and children under the age of 15. These groups also tend to be at a higher risk of falling into poverty. Members of female-headed households are up to 10 per cent more likely to become impoverished, and two per cent less likely to escape from poverty than members of male-headed households. Race is strongly associated with living in poverty in South Africa, with black Africans at the highest risk. Large families, children and people in rural areas are especially vulnerable to living in poverty for a prolonged time.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a study entitled *They Are Too Quiet About Migration*, to investigate the nature of migration and disability in South Africa. It focused on the extent to which migrants living with a disability are included in related policies in South Africa. The scoping exercise took place mainly in the province of Gauteng, a major destination for migrants hoping for a better life, and the town of Musina, a major entry point into South Africa. One key finding highlighted the fact that while there are national and international policies on disability in general, very few take the specific needs and rights of migrants with disabilities into account. As a result, vulnerable migrants with disabilities remain hidden and are often excluded not just from policies, but also from subsequent social welfare programming. There is therefore a need for migration-aware and mobility-competent policies and programmes in South Africa.

Recurring disasters exacerbate protection issues in South Africa. The 2022 floods and landslides presented the risk of family separation and severe distress for children, due to the loss of their homes and disruption to their daily lives. The disaster also led to an increase in gender-based violence due to a breakdown in community structures, law and order and a lack of physical protection.

### Main actions and areas of support:

The South African Red Cross plans to ensure that its programmes promote the dignity, access, participation and safety of everyone it supports, regardless of their race, sex, language, nationality, disability and age. As a rainbow nation, the National Society relies on contributions from different members of communities, which is why engaging with communities before, during and after disasters continues to be a major strength in addressing challenges and raising awareness of issues.



© South African Red Cross

The National Society also plans to provide improved access to equitable and quality education to boys and girls affected by disasters.

Due to its structure and ways of working, the National Society is able to operate in tense situations. For example, in its [response](#) to the urban violence and unrest in 2021, supported by an IFRC DREF allocation, the South African Red Cross used the [community engagement and accountability](#) approach to engage communities in conflict resolutions, and promote peaceful local level advocacy. The National Society also integrated peer education into its interventions, empowering young people to support human rights and responsibilities. The National Society used existing community structures to implement the response operation, ensuring the involvement of key stakeholders such as community leaders, while prioritizing the involvement of people with special needs. Furthermore, the National Society set

up feedback mechanisms to listen to community concerns and enable local people to give feedback on the operation. The community engagement and accountability methods were carried out through household interviews, focus group discussions and community radio station broadcasts, which raised awareness and promoted community dialogue.

The National Society also focuses on improving the understanding, ownership and concrete application of humanitarian values and the Fundamental Principles among young people in communities. Young people are the future of the National Society, and as a result, safeguarding them and involving them in activities is imperative. Through its youth empowerment activities, the National Society will continue to support young people by funding projects for their ideas and innovations.

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## Enabling local actors

The South African Red Cross is committed to its institutional strengthening and is engaged in the IFRC [Preparedness for Effective Response](#) process. It is currently at the orientation phase. The 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.

In alignment with the IFRC Strategy 2030, the South African Red Cross's organizational development and capacity-building initiatives seek to strengthen National

Society structures. This will ensure that it meets its objective of serving vulnerable communities, with support from the IFRC, the ICRC and participating National Societies, and become more self-sufficient by building additional self-generating revenue streams.

### Engaged

The South African Red Cross will play an advocacy role to address issues of concern in the country. The National Society will develop and distribute advocacy materials, with IFRC and ICRC support, to achieve its strategic priorities and ensure that they are aligned with the

Government's priorities. It will also work to increase the profile of the National Society and its work – particularly during emergencies – as a way of promoting itself as the partner of choice. The National Society will continue to work closely with other National Societies in the cluster for benchmarking, and providing peer-to-peer support on issues and common goals.

The South African Red Cross has embarked on a digital transformation journey, with the aim of ensuring that its systems and processes are translated into digital platforms. It will implement data management systems to improve its efficiency during emergency operations. The National Society is also working towards the implementation of digital community engagement and accountability processes. It will continue improving its current community feedback mechanism, and upscale mobile data collection tools.

### Accountable

As the available pool of funding opportunities is shrinking, it is more important than ever for the South African Red Cross to be more accountable to its donors and funders. The National Society will strengthen the administrative capacity of its provincial and branch structures, standardizing and enhancing its performance. The National Society will also produce timely financial and results-based programme reports, create additional revenue streams, and explore non-traditional streams of income to survive in a digital economy.

The National Society will strengthen its planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting unit. This will ensure

the good quality of the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes aimed at achieving the objectives of specific strategic priorities. The National Society will also develop planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting tools to capture and track its progress on specific indicators, with the aim of achieving its goals.

### Trusted

As a community-based organization, the South African Red Cross aims to be close to the communities it serves. It must balance its income generation activities with delivering on mandated activities, to better promote its legitimacy with local authorities and its credibility with beneficiaries and the wider public. The National Society will ensure that policies and strategic plans are in place, with technical support from the IFRC and other Movement partners. The National Society will participate in and contribute to Movement partnerships and coordination meetings, and the IFRC will support it to ensure that interventions are aligned with the empowerment of communities affected by crises. The National Society will also design programmes that cultivate trust and meet the needs of communities.

The South African Red Cross will review its volunteer and youth policies, to ensure that young people and volunteers are actively taking part in the National Society's decision-making processes. Volunteers are the backbone of the National Society, so it must provide volunteers with the necessary skills to perform their duties well, while prioritizing volunteer wellness, recruitment and management in all programmes and activities.

## THE IFRC NETWORK

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### The IFRC

The IFRC supports the South African Red Cross through its country cluster delegation for South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Namibia, which is based in Pretoria, South Africa. The IFRC supports the South African Red Cross with strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme. The IFRC supports the South African Red Cross to strengthen its auxiliary role by meeting key stakeholders at Government level on a regular basis.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the South African Red Cross through multiple DREF and Emergency Appeal [operations](#) in response to floods and landslides, tropical storms, storm surges, extreme thunderstorms, civil unrest and urban violence. Three operations were carried out in 2021 alone, and two in 2022 that will extend into 2023. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC, through its [global Emergency Appeal](#), has supported the National Society with delivering its COVID-19 response.

To support the floods and landslides Emergency Appeal, the IFRC has set up a technical support platform to support the National Society with managing its current emergency and recovery programmes.

## Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Engaged
Qatar Red Crescent	CHF 0.30M	

### Total

0.30M

The IFRC has provided technical support to the South African Red Cross to carry out the rapid assessment, communication, resource mobilization, design and implementation of the response, in close coordination with other Movement partners. The IFRC also provided psychological first aid training to staff and volunteers, as part of their preparedness activities, enabling them to deliver crucial psychological support throughout the response.

## IFRC membership coordination

The IFRC's coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agree common priorities and co-develop 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 involves ensuring that strategies and programmes incorporate the clarity of humanitarian action and of development assistance, and reinforce the auxiliary role of National Societies.

The South African 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 South African Red Cross has longer-term partnerships with three participating National Societies:

**The Belgian Red Cross** supports the National Society with strengthening disaster relief and capacity building. During the 2022 floods and landslides response, the first aid skills that volunteers had gained through support from the Belgian Red Cross in the past proved useful among the first responders who attend to emergencies and crises in their communities. The Belgian Red Cross also provided bilateral support to the National Society with first aid skills during the response operation.

**The British Red Cross** supports the National Society on disaster management, restoring family links, and governance matters as part of National Society development.

**The Netherlands Red Cross** supports the National Society on innovation and information management systems.

Other National Societies support the South African Red Cross through the IFRC or through ad hoc bilateral support. The **Qatar Red Crescent** bilaterally supported the National Society with medical relief items for the floods and landslides emergency response.

## Movement coordination

The IFRC liaises with the ICRC across regional and sub-regional areas of collaboration, including supporting National Societies in Southern Africa. During emergencies in South Africa, the South African Red Cross, the IFRC, the ICRC and participating National Societies closely coordinate, in order to align their support to the emergency response. This is also the case during the 2022 floods and landslides operation. Coordination is

carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation principles and the newly adopted Seville Agreement 2.0.

The ICRC, through its Pretoria regional delegation, monitors the humanitarian situation in the region, promotes international humanitarian law, and restores contact between family members separated by conflict.

The ICRC supports the South African Red Cross with disaster management, restoring family links and governance. In the 2022 floods and landslides response, the ICRC is providing support with protecting family links,

to enable the National Society to undertake activities that help reconnect families and address the issue of missing persons.

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## Coordination with other actors

In line with its auxiliary role, the South African Red Cross collaborates closely with the public authorities. During emergencies, the National Disaster Management Centre coordinates the interventions from all humanitarian agencies, with support from other UN agencies, through the Command-and-Control Centre.

To support the 2022 floods and landslides response, civil society members and NGOs have been working jointly with the South African Government to provide immediate assistance at the provincial level. To avoid duplication of efforts, the joint operating committee agreed that the South African Red Cross and the Department of Social Development will be responsible for conducting assessments and lead relief operations. Other departments, such as those for Water Affairs, Agriculture, Forestry and Roads, focus on restoring and rehabilitating damaged infrastructure in the affected provinces. At a provincial level, weekly joint operating committee meetings are held, and the National Society actively participates in them.

During episodes of urban violence, the South African Red Cross also works closely with the Cooperative of Governance and Traditional Affairs. During the July 2021 violence, which affected the areas surrounding the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, the

cooperative commissioned a joint needs assessment with the National Society to ascertain the full impact of the damages and the number of people affected. Follow-up assessments involved National Society volunteers and local communities, who collaborated with social workers from the Department of Social Development and officials from the local disaster management centre, to identify the at-risk households headed by older people and children in their branches.

The South African Red Cross partners with the Government to build its capacity in climate change adaptation, disaster management and health. It also partners with UN agencies and other national and international organizations to deliver its programmes and operations. UNICEF supports the National Society in disaster relief and capacity building, while the UNDP supports disaster relief and gender integration programming. Santam supports disaster relief and capacity building across disaster management, first aid and communications. Old Mutual supports disaster relief and capacity building in the areas of cash and voucher assistance, small, medium and micro-sized enterprises, and life skills. Nedbank collaborates with the National Society to deliver disaster relief and capacity-building for the information management of cash and voucher assistance.

### 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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### South Africa Red Cross Society

**W** [redcross.org.za](http://redcross.org.za)

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