



Western province volunteers in trainings during the Civil Unrest DREF Operation in August 2022.

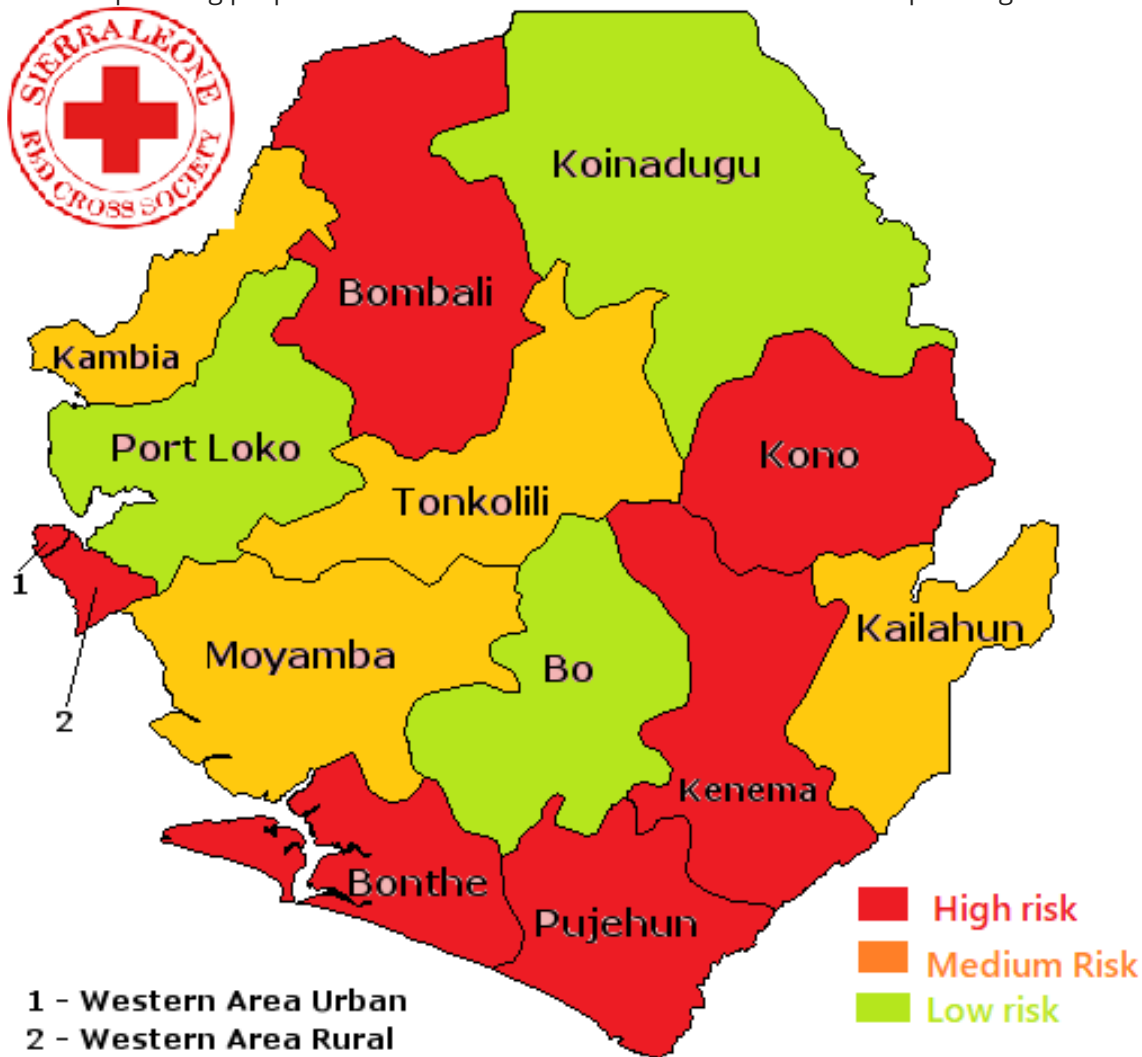
Appeal: MDRSL015	Country: Sierra Leone	Hazard: Other	Type of DREF Imminent
Crisis Category: Yellow	Event Onset: Sudden	DREF Allocation: CHF 172,004	
Glide Number: N/A	People at risk: 1,100,000 people	People Targeted: 75,000 people	
Operation Start Date: 2023-06-08	Operation Timeframe: 2 months	Operation End Date: 2023-08-31	DREF Published: 2023-06-09
Targeted Areas:			

Description of the Event

Approximate date of impact

General elections (presidential and parliamentary) are scheduled to be held in Sierra Leone in June 2023 as follows:

- 24th June: Presidential election voting
- 24th June up to the second week of July 2023: Proclamation of parliamentary representatives, following the Proportional Representation system. Following the National Society contingency planning, a period of up to two weeks is estimated for planning purposes. The Election calendar can be found here: <https://ec.gov.sl/electoral-calendar/#>



Map of hotspot districts in Sierra Leone. Source: SLRCS

What is expected to happen?

General elections are scheduled in Sierra Leone from June to July 2023 following the calendar issued by the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL). This election includes, first, a Presidential election and a Parliamentary process across the country.

The Election campaign started in 2022 and was completed in May 2023. Since, there have been indicators that social or civil unrest would likely be experienced during the election period, requiring heightened readiness of the National Society to support potentially affected communities under its mandate. The coming elections will be held as follow:

- 24th June 2023 Presidential - voting day in the 16 districts of the country.
- 25th to 28th June 2023, Proclamation of the results of the presidential election. This is an estimated date based on

historical process which usually takes up to 4 days.

- Proclamation of Parliamentary representative following the Proportional representative system established in early 2023. The date for the start and end of this is not specified but all election processes must be completed from June to July. Following the NS contingency planning, a period of two weeks is estimated for planning purposes.

With regards to the upcoming 2023 General Elections period, incidences of inter-communal conflict have so far been observed in many parts of the country. Indeed, these elections will be held against the backdrop of a severe complex economic crisis and periods of civil unrest surrounding governance issues. In the period leading to the election, the country has witnessed civil unrest, economic instability, currency devaluation, and multiple disasters, especially in the country's capital city, Freetown. The widespread protest of August 2022 was a violent example of turmoil in Freetown and other cities in Sierra Leone. Indeed, thousands of protesters mobilized around the country, blocking roads and main supply routes demonstrating unemployment, economic hardship, and injustices, demanding reductions in fuel prices, economic relief for indebted families, fair prices for agricultural products, employment and labour rights, security, and protection. Over 34 people were injured, 30 deaths (including 3 police officers), and many detained in different parts of the country. These events are analyzed to be the reflection of what could happen during the upcoming general elections.

Moreover, some recent analyses report that ahead of the June 24 poll, a rematch of the 2018 vote, identity issues and economic stagnation are also on the ballot.

After the change of the Parliamentary voting system in early 2023 from a complete election system to a Proportional representative system. Proportional Representation is a type of electoral system under which subgroups of an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body. This could add more expectations from the population on the Presidential elections, given that level of changes in the presidential votes may also lead to parallel changes of the National and local possible representatives across the country. The hope for politico-economical changes is highly expected based on some allegations and past analysis reporting a high corruption level across the country with some economical challenges not resolved. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/6/1/familiar-faces-concerns-linger-ahead-of-sierra-leones-june-vote>.

The period preceding the elections (until late March) has seen episodic protests and reports of intimidation against opposition parties. This and the intimidation actions already reported against the opposition indicate that the relative calm reported in other sources can also deteriorate. Between the most recent event, there has been members of the opposition wounded or shoot and some violence in the past weeks since the campaign. <https://sierraloaded.sl/news/police-officer-shot-dead-makeni/> / https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=201648819459006&extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-IO5_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=irwG9G&ref=sharing&_rdc=1&_rdr / <https://sierraloaded.sl/politics/slpp-apc-campaign-chairman/> <https://apanews.net/2023/02/10/sleone-first-ladys-female-bodyguard-dies-in-accident/>

Whilst the priority is to support peacebuilding and prevention of violence efforts, previous outbreaks of violence have demonstrated the importance of planning for potential humanitarian response activities.



Potential hotspots in regions/districts				
No	District	Towns at risk	Level of Risks	Reasons / Justifications
1	Western Area Urban and Rural	East End of Freetown, Waterloo, Tombo	High	• High population density and incidences of pre- and post-election tension
2	Bombali	Makeni	High	• Existence of Inter-party political differences including incidences of pre and post electoral violence. • History of tension, Inter political party indifference
3	Kono	Koidu, niniyama, nimikoro, Sandor, soa, gbaneh	High	• Cross carpeting from party to the other.
4	Kailahun	Luawa, Njaluhun the 3 kissi	Medium	• Political intolerance
5	Kambia	Magbema, Brimaia, Tonko Liamba	Medium	• Perceived registration of non-Sierra Leoneans
6	Port Loko	Lungi, Port Loko town, Lunsar	Medium	• Post-election violence • Interparty political difference • Tribal political differences
7	Tonkolili	Mile 91, Magburaka, Masingbi	Medium	• Post-election tension
8	Karene	Kamakwe, Kamalo	High	• Hotspots communities
9	BO	Bo city	High	• Political indifference
10	Moyamba	Rotifunk, Moyamba Jnx	Medium	• High rate of political contestants despite its relatively small population size.
11	Bonthe	Imperi	High	• Political intolerance
12	Koinadugu	Kabala	Low	• Political intolerance

Mapping of Hotspots areas from SLRCS contingency plan

Why your National Society is acting now and what criteria is used to launch this operation.

Rational to intervene and main risk

- The election history from 1961 to 2018 and the current events since the 2023 election campaign described in the above situation have shown high indications to face a similar situation. Especially with the recent violence on some opposition representatives and considering also events of August 2022. All indicate the choc can be even worst, during this election. The probability is high to see sudden violence happen in the main cities given that the socio-economical situation and the origin of the recent protest remain actual and not solved.
- In addition, since the launch of the election calendar, there have been some sporadic acts of violence and wounded reported by media to be linked to the elections. As a reminder, the protest and violence have always been sudden in Sierra Leone and even when short, they always remain very violent with death and several people wounded and affected.
- The fact that both the Presidential and Parliamentary are now linked together increases the risk to have one results impact the second and seeing the above-anticipated situation happen in a very short period exactly as it happen in August 2022.

Trigger for this intervention

The trigger sets for this intervention are 2: i) the indicators and threshold set in the contingency plan that explains the activation of this DREF operation and the start of the readiness of NS; ii) the date for the elections which established 2 rounds for the early actions following the election calendar above (week of presidential and period of parliamentary proclamation).

- First trigger to activate the early warning is when clear indications show the probability of at least 1250 people being at risk or affected by any form of consequences from the electoral campaign to the election date.
- The second established trigger to activate the NS early warning system and readiness are when at least when protest/arrest/Violence of election with political figures experiencing the same during the campaign.

The second indicator is already reached and as per the context above, the risk also explained with people at risk likely go beyond the 1250 people across the 6 districts main hotspots: Western Area Urban and Rural districts, Bombali, Kono, Karene, Bonthe. As such, following the most likely scenario, NS needs to ensure readiness and necessary pre-positioning and equipment of hotspot branches. The readiness action will start when this intervention is launched and completed a week before the Presidential election date 24th June 2023.

The trigger for early actions in this intervention will follow the formal election agenda issued by the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL).

- If no changes on the election agenda are announced at least two days before the vote, SLRCS aligned with the contingency plan will engage the first round of early actions 2 days before the election up to the proclamation,



usually taking up to 4 days after following the vote.

- The second round of early actions is planned to continue until the Parliamentary proclamations by mid-July, estimated Two weeks from the presidential.

SLRCS will also follow the National/ international Media and branches of SLRCS reports of violence, demonstration, or incident in the 6 hotspots districts a week before the election. High-risk areas identified in the contingency plan will be the target for this plan with flexibility depending on real-time updates.

Scope and Scale

Since independence (1961) to date, all elections held have been characterized by violent demonstrations and riots before, during, and after the elections across the country. Sometimes violent riots continue to increase several months after the elections because of disappointment with the election results and frequently because of hardship, lack of basic needs and attainable life opportunities and rights. In real-time consideration, upon which this plan is rooted, the June 24, 2023, elections already indicate the likelihood to face a similar situation. This notion is based on the occurrences of deadly Civil unrest in the last three years in Tombo, Makeni, Port Loko, Kenema, Bo, Kamakwei, Waterloo, and Freetown – the capital city of Sierra Leone. The recent killing of an OSD Police Officer in Makeni (the stronghold of the opposition party APC), with other social media voice messages by unknown Sierra Leoneans are signals and recipes for conflict. Also, several reports of allegations and protests against the economic and social context still unresolved are a clear indication that the situation could deteriorate.

The recent developments in Sierra Leone's political landscape with shifting political alliances, indicate the potential for tensions and require to be prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to potentially affected communities. Learning from the bye-elections over the past years associated with violence, especially in Western Area and Northern Koinadugu, the situation could lead to a direct impact on the population in areas that have been identified as hotspot areas, thus would need effective humanitarian support. Based also on learnings, it has been clear that even when elections start in a relatively calm context, the violence is usually sudden and can go beyond the election date.

Based on Historical analysis and current stability and socio-economical context, SLRCS with the support of ICRC has identified the following main hotspot for the 2023 election.

High risk is 6 out of the 16 districts in the districts.

- Western Area Urban and Rural districts: East End of Freetown, Waterloo, Tombo cities. These in addition to being part of the historical and current hotspots are the most populated with the heaviest history of violence. The areas also count as the most populated and the ones with the highest registered voters, the highest representation of different political parties.
- Bombali: Makeni
- Kono: Koidu, nimiyama, nimikoro, Sandor, soa, gbaneh
- Karene: Kamakwei, Kamalo
- Bonthe: Imperi

More than 3.4 million people registered as voters across the country with around 50% leaving in the main hotspot areas. In the contingency plan scenario, at least 250 Households (1250 people) are to be directly exposed to the violence or at risk in the current scenario, and in the worst scenario anticipated at least 500 HH are at risk.

It is anticipated that additional emergency medical services may be needed in various parts of the country, including first aid, emergency medical transport, and/or blood services for the possible affected populations. In the event of protests, unrest, roadblocks, or heightened traffic additional support may be required to maintain continuity of routine ambulance and blood services. Due to the socio-economic crisis in the country, price hikes and fluctuations for critical commodities such as fuel and disruption to supply chains require forward planning to maintain adequate readiness.

The DREF operation aims to ensure that SLRCS is well-positioned to respond to the needs of all the population across the country and maintain the safety and security of volunteers and staff throughout the election period.



Previous Operations

Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years?	Yes
Did it affect the same population groups?	Yes
Did the National Society respond?	Yes
Did the National Society request funding from DREF for that event(s)?	Yes
If yes, please specify which operations	MDRSL012

If you have answered yes to all questions above, justify why the use of DREF for a recurrent event, or how this event should not be considered recurrent

The National Society requested a DREF in August 2022 in response to the civil unrest (MDRSL012), during which thousands of people demonstrated against the high cost of living in Sierra Leone mainly in the Western Region and other main cities. Through this operation, SLRCS provided support to injured persons. This situation is mentioned in this plan as there are linkages between the recent civil unrest and elections-related protests - indeed, the high cost of living is one of the main topics for the opposition parties as was the case in August 2022.

Even with different scopes, the current operation will be implemented in the same context with similar objectives. As such, the National Society will take advantage of trainings and stakeholder engagement done since August 2022 as they contribute to the current readiness of the National Society. These activities, mainly implemented in the Western area's urban and rural districts, will serve as a strong basis for rapid support as part of the current DREF operation for election preparedness.

Lessons learned

The Sierra Leone Civil Unrest DREF operation (MDRSL012) engaged the National Society in actions, helping them to build learnings that have informed the current planning. Indeed, the strategy rationale used during that intervention has appeared to be the right approach that will be used through this elections preparedness operation, especially for the immediate first aid and organization of the team. Some key operational learnings from MDRSL012 which will be duplicated include:

- The coordination with local institutions and access improved through engagement with the different stakeholders under the MDRSL012, and activities implemented then will be an enabler for fast and safer team deployment.
- One of the most successful learnings and added value, were the several dissemination sessions targeting police and military officers and the public, on the Red Cross emblem, humanitarian action, auxiliary role, and mandate. This has helped to increase understanding and trust in the Red Cross.
- Timely coordination and continuous planning with all stakeholders which was done under MDRSL012 were crucial to ensure preparedness and effective timely response. The same actions will be extended to continue SLRCS's work including peace promotion messages, while upholding the RCRC Principles as main guidance.

Current National Society Actions

In addition to the overall readiness with some staff and volunteers recently trained on health and first aids, NS also has the capacity and experience



Health	in mobilizing volunteers for blood donors, SDB teams, and management/ deployment of up to 10 ambulances.
Community Engagement And Accountability	Achieving safe access to affected people and communities requires maintaining the positive image that civilians and state actors, who recognize the Red Cross as an impartial and independent entity. In the past, the Red Cross emblem has been affected by its improper use by unauthorized individuals or entities authorized to do so while conducting actions contrary to the Fundamental Principles; these actions jeopardized all humanitarian personnel's safety and the National Society's reputation. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify efforts to disseminate information regarding the actions and the International Movement's humanitarian principles to increase civilians' and state actors' awareness regarding the work that the Red Cross performs and strengthen the population's trust in humanitarian personnel. Thus, there is a need to develop a communication strategy focusing on disseminating key messages on emergency response and prioritizing messages on the humanitarian role of the SLRCS in managing and intervening in civil unrest (such as dissemination through social networks and mass messaging), including the monitoring of traditional and digital media (social networks) to evaluate the contents, messages and primary and secondary actors that are part of the collective public opinion.
National Society Readiness	The current operation is in the same operational logic of the MDRSL012 even with a different scope, a number of activities already conducted under the MDRSL012 will count as part of the preparedness of the NS for this intervention and contribute to kickstarting the intervention and immediate activation of staff and volunteers in the Western and North Western districts where the previous DREF was focused. From that operation, NS has gained the following capacity that allows for the immediate health team across the hotspots to receive only a rapid one to Two-day briefing in all the sectors. Indeed, NS can count on : • 4 out of the 6 districts hotspots with some readiness activities already conducted, especially trainings and stakeholder engagement. This includes Freetown- (Western Area), Waterloo (Western Area Rural District), Makeni (capital of Bombali district), Kamakwie (capital of Karene districts), and Port Loko district. All being in the main red hotspots districts for the upcoming elections. • 20 staff and 80 volunteers trained already in PSS, First aid, Safe access and security, PGI, CEA, and feedback management in sensitive situations following the training conducted under MDRSL012 in Q4/2022 in the above locations. • 200 policy members and stakeholders trained on RCRC actions, RCRC emblem and principles, disaster law, and humanitarian principles in general in the Bombali and Western districts that will be reactivated. are incorporated into the preparation of the SN for a rapid response under this intervention. • 5 of the main cities in Western provinces have benefited from engagement and promotion messages with improved knowledge and acceptance of RC actions. In the last five years, NS has also invigorated its capacity to meet expected standards in emergency response and has developed Elections Management Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) to guide the implementation of this DREF operation. The current capacity of SLRCS Includes but is not limited to the following: •A functional and shared leadership structure within the Governance and

	Management structures • has more than 10,000 active volunteers found throughout the country. At least a hundred in each main districts targeted. There is also a branch in all the 6 hotspots. •The National Society is well guided by the Fundamental Principles of the RCRC Movement and operates in conformity with these principles. •The NS has the capacity to provide timely response to emergencies and disasters. •It has a wealth of highly motivated, knowledgeable, experienced, and readily available human resource base. •There are operational vehicles (utility and ambulances) and are all marked with the protective Red Cross emblem. • All 13 branches are fully equipped with Emergency Response Teams (ERT) made up of staff and volunteers. • A good coordination system, internal and external. Details in respective sections.
Coordination	• The NS enjoys and maintains its autonomy and independence while working closely with the government and partners. • Emergency and other humanitarian activities are highly recognized and appreciated by the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone. • There is cordial coordination and collaboration with relevant line Ministries such as the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS), Social Welfare and Gender; the Office of National Security (ONS), National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), the UN System, International, and Local Non-governmental Agencies, etc. Crisis and disaster response is the first thematic area in the National Society Strategic Plan (2023 - 2027), Preparedness for Effective Response (PER), and the operational plan (2022 – 2023). This emergency plan of action (EPOA) is therefore directly linked to our strategic direction.
Activation Of Contingency Plans	The Election Preparedness and Response Contingency plans will be activated in line with the different scenarios set out in the plan, the response, in any case, will be guided as per the contingency plan and proposed action in the scenario planning.
National Society EOC	Considering the election will take place across the country, with the potential for tensions to arise before, during, and even after the elections, it is important to set up a base for SLRCS volunteers and staff. As such, it is important to make function the emergency operation center (EOC) for branches to share information collected from working within the community to support overall strategic planning. The EOC will be set up and will remain functional from the period of the campaign to the announcement of results. Regular situation analysis and updates will be shared with staff, volunteers, and movement partners. The national society, as part of its staff and volunteers capacity-building process, utilized the previous emergency plan of action MDRSL012 to conduct a series of training workshops on various relevant topics such as High Insecurity Training (HIT), Emergency First Aid Services, stress management, Psychological and Psychosocial support before, during and after violent elections, community engagement and accountability, principles and use of community feedback systems, protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) and use of the Emblem for 120 staff members and volunteers, 200 Sierra Leone Police Officers and 200 Military personnel. Similar training will be conducted for additional emergency response team, staff, and volunteers on Fundamental



humanitarian Principles, the use and misuse of the Emblem and emergency coordination communication protocols, Refresher training on RFL, and Psycho-social support for staff and volunteers.

Movement Partners Actions Related To The Current Event

IFRC	The IFRC maintains a country office in Freetown, providing technical assistance to the SLRCS with humanitarian operations related to disasters and crises caused by natural hazards; health services in hard-to-reach areas; longer-term resilience-building programmes; coordinating support by IFRC membership to; enhancement of organizational development; and representing internationally. Through representation & coordination, the IFRC Country Delegation in the previous disasters and crises, including the August 2022 Civil Unrest from the onset of the Response engaged leadership & supported the identification of 's areas of intervention, its roles, and responsibilities in its coordination with Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement partners, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and donors through networking and collaboration.
ICRC	ICRC has no offices in Sierra Leone but supports Sierra Leone through the Abidjan Office. Support is provided in the area of safety and security, and also training programs on communication and security. The input to the contingency plan done early will continue for the potential revision. Also, under this DREF, ICRC will be engaged to facilitate the safer access training, security briefing and RLF.
Participating National Societies	In addition to IFRC, British Red Cross and Finish Red Cross are Movement partners with a presence in Sierra Leone. The Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement's coordination in Sierra Leone is anchored in the Movement Cooperation Agreement (MCA) which outlines the functional coordination mechanisms in the country with regular meetings at the leadership, operational, and technical levels. The functional Movement's coordination mechanisms and practical application in the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) process in Sierra Leone continues to reinforce a coordinated and complementary Movement response.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission is responsible for administering elections in coordination with other relevant bodies. The International community has engaged through the International Support Group for Sierra Leone and has deployed election monitors in the country. is an active member of the National Disaster Risk Management Agency and maintains regular coordination with relevant bodies in terms of needs and interventions. The leadership team is following-up and participating in some of the planning meetings convened by the Office of the National Security (ONS),



	Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL), and Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) which are the leading Government oversight bodies for all national security matters. The national society will use its existing partnership with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation on emergency medical services before, during, and after the elections. To date, has shared and circulated the contingency plan with EC-SL and all the branches at risk of election violence to be informed on the key interventions that would take place for the various scenarios outlined in the contingency plan.
UN or other actors	

Are there major coordination mechanisms in place?

Sierra Leone’s National Electoral Commission is responsible for administering elections in coordination with other relevant bodies. The International community has engaged through the International Support Group for Sierra Leone and has deployed election monitors in the country SLRCS is an active member of the National Disaster Risk Management Agency and maintains regular coordination with relevant bodies in terms of needs and interventions. The leadership team is following-up and participating in some of the planning meetings convened by the Office of the National Security (ONS), Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL), and Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) which are the leading Government oversight bodies for all national security matters. The national society will use its existing partnership with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation on emergency medical services before, during, and after the elections. To date, has shared and circulated the contingency plan with EC-SL and all the branches at risk of election violence to be informed on the key interventions that would take place for the various scenarios outlined in the contingency plan.



Anticipated Needs



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

A humanitarian response to protect people's health, fundamental rights, and lives amidst a context of social unrest is required. It is necessary to provide guidance and support to affected people so they can obtain the essential information on the range of protection services offered by the appropriate entities responsible for guaranteeing and restoring their civil rights, as well as direct referrals. As a result, SLRCS will strengthen the volunteer's capacity in topics that will allow them to provide better services to the community in need. Also, civil unrest and violent demonstrations bring together different groups of people, such as women, children, adolescents, indigenous people, or minority groups to significant security risks, especially if they do not receive timely medical attention. Considering the importance of protection issues, the SLRCS finds it essential that the volunteers know the minimum standards of PGI to provide priority and specialized attention to these groups in the different lines of response. It is considered necessary to map actors and referral routes for victims of gender-based violence and children and adolescents.



Health

Election campaign rallies in hotspot counties may lead to violence which could result in fatalities, injuries, separation of family members, and significant psychological effects. As such, the population in these high-risk areas will need support in terms of first aid care, medical evacuation, and referral to hospitals in the event of serious cases. In addition, volunteers and staff involved in activities will be exposed to any potential tensions/fights which could result in injuries and deaths if health and safety recommendations are not respected. This could cause Public psychological trauma, in both the affected communities and the volunteers/staff responding thus requiring psychosocial support.

The high cost of tariffs and the introduction of floor prices by mobile companies will limit the timely sharing of information by branches to support operational planning. There is a need to operationalize the hotline and activate CUG systems, which will improve communication throughout the period. This proved successful during the response to the EVD outbreak in Sierra Leone.

Inadequate equipment to support response operations including ambulance services, first aid kits, and insufficient fuel, could threaten SLRCS response capacity. Sourcing for these items during the election period could be risky as it is likely that movements will be limited. As such, it is important to ensure prepositioning of these items to ensure the full capacity of SLRCS in the event of tensions. This is even more relevant as the country is currently experiencing supply chain disruptions and fuel shortages.

Operationalizing hotline and activating CUG systems to improve communication with hotspot branches

Prepositioning of first aid kits and fuel to ensure the full capacity of SLRCS in the event of tensions.

Prepositioning Protective, and Visibility Materials: The materials need to be distributed to hotspot branches before the elections. This will assist branches to provide first aid services during campaign rallies and during the voting period. In addition, protective equipment (e.g. gloves, nose masks, stretchers, safety goggles, safety helmets) and visibility materials (ID cards, bibs, stickers, and flags) need to be made available to the branches for security and visibility purposes, both playing an essential role in this type of intervention.





Community Engagement And Accountability

- Public information to people on respect and protection of the Red Cross emblem, humanitarian action, and the medical mission.
- Humanitarian role messages are diffused within the community.
- Volunteers and humanitarian staff have institutional visibility.

This type of event is usually associated with several information flow and misinformation as well, rumors' and behavior of the communities not contributing to calm the situation or promote the access to the communities in different scenario.

The lack of understanding of humanitarian work by the actors involved can generate risks to the safety of the humanitarian personnel of the SLRCS, such as attacks on institutional engagement is a priority as well as engaging community leader in advance to the election and local security representative to ensure the risk communication and promote the right messages on RCRC that will enhance the access and safety.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The overall objective of the operation is to strengthen the capacities of SLRCS branches and volunteers to respond to humanitarian needs in the event of election-related violence until August, a month after the end of election agenda.

Operation strategy rationale

Proposed strategy include the specific objectives below:

- Reduce the risk of people losing their lives or getting injured by providing them with pre-hospital care, protection, and information.
- Reduce the risk of people's mental health issues arising from social unrest by providing vulnerable groups with psychosocial support.
- Mitigate the risk of attacks on the National Society that could lead to its inability to perform its humanitarian action by disseminating information to the public on the Red Cross emblem, humanitarian action, and medical missions.
- Technical assistance to the provincial branches, considering the approach of minimum standards related to protection, gender, and inclusion for emergencies.

This DREF Plan of Action will be implemented following two stage:

- i. The readiness of the NS and prepositioning to be completed one week before the election as it is anticipated disruption of normal distribution system.

Activities to be conducted will include:

- Briefings of a maximum of 3 days (where similar trainings were conducted Q4 2022 under MDRSL012) being 4 districts out of the 6 identified.
- Refresher trainings will be conducted in the others 2. These cover the most important topics such as High Insecurity Training (HIT), Emergency First Aid Services, Psychological and Psychosocial support before, during, and after violent protests, and managing electioneering processes, the use of the Emblem, the application of Fundamental Principles, and International Humanitarian Law (IHL).
- SLRCS will conduct training for additional 200 Sierra Leone Police officers and 200 RSLAF personnel on the Emblem, Red Cross Fundamental Principles, and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). This will be an addition to the 200 trained under MDRSL012
- Activate and engage gain with the 200 Sierra Leone police and security representative groups.



- Trained volunteers are expected to respond to any violence before, during, and after the elections.
- The volunteers will be equipped with first aid kits, materials and they will be linked to the referral facilities in the hotspot branches. The Disaster Management coordinators in the hotspot branches will act as links to both the National Society HQs and Volunteers. They will also ensure that the activities of the volunteers are well structured, monitored, and coordinated. Provision of first aid to victims of election violence; before, during, and after elections. Prevent injuries from getting worse, favoring the recovery of the affected person in a short time. Provision of emergency medical services to victims of election violence; before, during and after elections

The SLRCS team will also provide psychosocial support (including mental health and psychosocial support and psychological first aid) to victims of election violence but also to the 330 volunteers responding to different forms of election violence

ii. Deployment of team and early warning system/actions to be implemented one Week before the election until the end of the parliamentary election (official date of proclamation not clearly identified for now).

The team will ensure:

- Deployment of first aid team and ambulances during the election period. 7 days for the presidential and 14 days for the parliamentary. During this stage, the first aid team will still be mobilized in a rotation and will cover all the period from the week of the election to the the week of announcement of the parliament officials expected to be by Mid-July for NS easy planning.
- Security update and monitoring of the situation through the surveillance team from 22nd June to end of the election in July 2023. Possibly, this time could be extended based on how the situation evolve.
- Coordination with RCRC partners, local authorities and official election agency and other partners.

iii. Transversal sectors and support services

All trained volunteers will also go through the one-day communication skills and complaints handling training for community-based volunteers. This training covers key topics such as the Fundamental Principles, good communication skills and how to engage with communities, managing difficult questions and complaints, and responding safely to tension and frustration in communities. Communication on NS mission and principles with the population will be carried out through radio discussions, community meetings, and distribution of flyers. In addition, four community dissemination sessions will be held in each district and will be supported by 10 volunteers (per branch). Specific messages on NS mission, vision, neutrality, and independence will be developed and disseminated through media, the National Society website, and its social media platform (Twitter and Facebook) as well as community meetings to enable communities to better understand the SLRCS position in the upcoming elections and contribute to the safe access of volunteers. IEC materials on the Red Cross's fundamental principles and the role of the SLRCS during the elections will be distributed to the population as well.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

It is likely that the most exposed population will be those attending rallies during the campaign period and those participating in the voting process on the polling days. After the elections, if there is dissatisfaction among people with the outcome of the election results, violence may affect many people (including women, children, residents, security officers, and electoral officers) and the affected will be provided with assistance by the SLRCS volunteers and staff. The SLRCS will target the most vulnerable populations, such as women, children, the disabled, and the elderly (amongst others).

NS will plan on the worst-case scenario with consideration of at least 250 HH to 500 HH at risk per higher at-risk cities in the red districts hotspots. Meaning approximately 15,000HH in the hotspots districts (75000 people). The main hotspots are districts of Bombali, Western Area rural and urban, Bo, Kenema, Port Loko, Kambia, and Pujehun identified as hotspots for the 2023 General Elections in the National Society contingency plan. The DREF operation is expected to support up to 75,000 people in these hotspots with 20% at least to be reached with first aid and other early actions.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population



Targeting follows the Election Contingency Plan, which specifies that in total, approximately 3.4 million people are estimated to live in the at-risk areas and the majority of voters registered are in those districts.

Total Targeted Population

Women:	30,000	Rural %	Urban %
Girls (under 18):	12,000	30.00 %	70.00 %
Men:	23,000	People with disabilities (estimated %)	
Boys (under 18):	10,000	%	
Total targeted population:	75,000		

Risk and security considerations

Please indicate about potential operational risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
Possible violence during election could also exposed Personnel are exposed to safety and security risks.	Use of emblem and other visibility items. Strict adherence to existing safety protocols and coordination with relevant authorities regarding security environment.
Political and security tensions	Modules on Safer Access will be delivered to volunteers, with the application of SAF being emphasized.
Increased workload for staff and volunteers already assigned to other interventions	A clear distribution of tasks will ensure that the coordination of the various interventions runs smoothly. will refocus its strategy, prioritizing hot spots to ensure it operates within its capacities.
Inflation and prices increased of items	The current planning take into consideration the prices inflation recently implemented in months ago but the market remains volatile with a risk of increase again. In that case, revision of the allocation could be made to avoid any deficit.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

Sierra Leone is acclaimed as one of Africa's most successful post-conflict states, but the country remains fragile to political violence and other forms of civil unrest based on some international analysis. Every election since independence has been attended by violence. Support for political parties is polarized on ethnic and regional lines and underwritten by patronage. Youth unemployment and poverty are endemic thus always making demonstrations ripe. Since independence (1961) to date, all elections held have been characterized by violent demonstrations and riots before, during, and after the elections across the country. Sometimes violent riots continue to increase several months after the elections because of disappointment with the election results and frequently because of hardship, lack of basic needs, and attainable life opportunities and rights. In real-time consideration, upon which this plan is rooted, June 24, 2023, elections could likely not be an exception. This notion is based on the occurrences of deadly Civil unrest in the last three years in Tombo, Makeni, Port Loko, Kenema, Bo, Kamakwei, Waterloo, and Freetown – the capital city of Sierra Leone with no significant support since that

p r o t e s t

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/sierra-leone-seven-months-after-au->



gusts-protests-which-turned-violent-in-some-locations-no-justice-yet-for-those-injured-or-the-families-of-those-killed/. Also, the recent killing of an OSD Police Officer in Makeni (the stronghold of the opposition party APC), with other social media voice messages by unknown Sierra Leoneans are signals and recipes for conflict. The recent developments in Sierra Leone's political landscape with shifting political alliances, indicate the potential for tensions and require to be prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to potentially affected communities.

Learning from the bye-elections over the past years associated with violence, especially in Western Area and Northern Koinadugu, the situation could lead to a direct impact on the population in areas that have been identified as hotspot areas, thus would need effective humanitarian support. The Voters Identification Card has now become the focus of heated political discussion ahead of the June 24, 2023, general elections. The voter's ID cards are criticized due to some photos not easily identifiable, and the security features were not real- but fake. The main opposition party has issued a press release warning a few issues raised on the voter cards to be addressed, and will not allow unprotected cards to be used as the identity for eligibility in the forthcoming or any other election in which they participate. And have said to exercise its constitutional right to call for a nationwide peaceful protest to demonstrate dissatisfaction if the situation is not addressed. ECSL had appealed to all affected Sierra Leoneans to rectify any issue with ECSL within a stipulated timeframe but whether that appeal was heeded could not be ascertained at this moment. The DREF operation aims to ensure that SLRCS is well-positioned to respond to the needs of all the population across the country and maintain the safety and security of volunteers and staff throughout the election period.

To reduce the risk of RCRC personnel falling victim to crime, violence, or road hazards active risk mitigation measures must be adopted. Security orientation and briefing for all teams prior to deployment will also be undertaken to help ensure the safety and security of response teams. Standard security protocols about general norms, cultural sensitivity, and an overall code of conduct will be put in place. Minimum-security requirements will be strictly maintained. The Delegation has an election Contingency Plan. All National Society and IFRC personnel actively involved in the operations must successfully complete prior to deployment the respective IFRC security e-learning courses (i.e., Level 1 Fundamentals, Level 2 Personal and Volunteer Security, and Level 3 Security for Managers). IFRC security plans will apply to all IFRC staff throughout the operation. Area-specific Security Risk Assessment will be conducted for any operational area should any IFRC personnel deploy there; risk mitigation measures will be identified and implemented.

Also, vehicles, especially ambulances, facilities, and personnel in the Provincial Branches. Mitigating these operational risks requires proper equipment, identification, visibility, life insurance activation, and humanitarian staff and volunteer training on safer access and operational security. Therefore, the personnel that will be involved in operations to assist with first aid, pre-hospital care, psychosocial support, and re-establishing family contact require protective gear to increase their safety.



Planned Intervention

	Health	Budget	CHF 52,393
		Targeted Persons	15000
Indicators		Target	
Number of days of ambulance and first aid responder deployed		21	
Number of first aid response teams de- ployed in 6 districts		10	
Number of first aid response volunteers deployed per county		180	
Number of staff deployed		33	
Priority Actions:		i. Pre-positioning and readiness • Purchase and preposition 100 first aid kits for 10 targeted branches (10 per branch at least. • Briefing of the team on PSS and first aid in 4 districts trained on Q4 of 2022 and Refresher trainings to cover the others districts. This will be a joint training with the ones budgeted in the DRR • Preposition an ambulance in each of the 4 Regional headquarters • Maintenance of ten (10) Emergency Response ambulance services • Fuel supply for 15 vehicles and 10 ambulance drivers across the country, to be procured and store to anticipate disruption. ii. Early actions • Deploy 30 volunteers in each district to provide care to persons affected/injured before, during and after the 2023 General Elections for a minimum of 21 days • Provide PSS to people affected by elections violence • Provide PSS to staff and volunteers • Establish referral pathways for complex cases • Provide first Aid support to victims of violence before, during and after elections • Provide ambulance services and pre-hospital care to people victims of election violence during the week of Presidential and the week of parliamentary for a total of 14 to 20 days. covering days of results. • Facilitate Voluntary Blood donation in the 6 districts during the election period, at least 2 weeks mobilize volunteers in various health facilities and support minimum health recovery nutriment for donors.	

	Protection, Gender And Inclusion	Budget	CHF 9,665
		Targeted Persons	75000
Indicators		Target	
# of volunteers briefed on PGI guideline based on the specific needs		330	
# of volunteers trained on Minimum Protection Approach, Safe Referral, prevention and mitigation of violence, code of ethics, security policy Framework for Safer Access		330	
Priority Actions:		• Organize basic training for 330 volunteers and 33 supervisors on protection principles, including Child • Protection (CP), Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Safe Identification and referral. • Mapping and strengthening and sharing of SGBV referral pathways Volunteers and staff are briefed on and sign, 1. Code of conduct 2.Child protection policy/guidelines 3.PSEA. • Develop and disseminate targeted peace messages through Radio discussion programmes to cover countrywide to trigger community peace promotion and coexistence.	

	National Society Strengthening	Budget	CHF 100,309
		Targeted Persons	363
Indicators		Target	
Number of volunteers provided with food		330	
Number of joint field monitoring visits conducted by SLRCS/IFRC		1	
Number of ready to eat meal packs prepositioned		840	
Number of volunteers trained and deployed to provide care to persons affected/injured before, during and after the 2023 General Elections			
Number of volunteers trained in PFA			
Number of ERT team deployed		10	
		1500	

Priority Actions:

NS will ensure smooth internal communication, adequate volunteer management, as well as clear information and security management. Based on scenario planning, these preparedness actions aim to equip SLRCS trained staff and volunteers to reach out to at least 75,000 people in the high-risk districts with first aid services and psychosocial support, as well as dissemination of peace messages, during the campaign, voting and result proclamation phase of the election period. During the election period, volunteers will be mobilized at all Polling Centers to ensure readiness to respond to routine and election-related first aid and transport needs, while support will be provided to volunteers at all polling centers across the country as circumstances require. The operation will include the procurement of fuel, first aid kits, and visibility equipment. In addition, will help equip blood banks to maintain and, if needed, scale up blood services. IFRC operational support to the DREF operation will be provided primarily through the Freetown Country Cluster Delegation including close collaboration between the IFRC FCCD Security Unit and SLRCS counterparts, as well as continuous support to Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER). Activities will include:

Readiness

- Ensure volunteers' safety and wellbeing and Insured 330 volunteers involved in the operation
- Provide complete briefings on volunteers' roles and the risks they face
- Provide psychosocial support to volunteers
- Ensure volunteers are aware of their rights and responsibilities
- Ensure volunteers are properly trained Ensure volunteers' engagement in decision-making processes of respective projects they implement
- Conduct joint /IFRC mission to monitor activities HQ Monitoring of operation in target locations
- User Group (CUG) for members of situation rooms, branch managers, and Team leaders. This will be the free phone line connected with all the EOC members to ease the communication.
- Production of IEC materials on the role of SLRCS in elections
- Deploy 330 volunteers in ten branches to provide support to the communities exposed/at risk during and after the 2023 General Elections for 30 days.
- Procure and preposition protective equipment for volunteers and supervisors
- Prepositioning of food ready to eat, blankets and minimum surge material for mobilized team during the elections and proclamations days. to anticipate on disruption of distributions, shops etc. A set up of a monitoring center in each districts with necessary provision for the team during the election.
- Training of SLRCS emergency response team, staff, and volunteers on Fundamental humanitarian Principles, the use and misuse of the Emblem and emergency coordination, and communication protocols.
- Promotion of peace, RCRC principle and emblem in the commu-



nities through group discussion and meeting with local community leaders and Local authorities and security.

Early actions

- Organize deployment for 330 volunteers/staff per targeted branch in all 10 targeted locations.
- Volunteers will be deployed week of Presidential election - 2 days before the 24th June and until the proclamation. Estimated 7 days
- The second phase of deployment will be during the week of Parliamentary proclamation expected a week or two weeks after presidential. Estimated 14 days.
- Lessons learned and experience sharing workshop and include the learnings to inform or revise the contingency plan.
- Promotion of peace, RCRC principle and emblem in the communities through group discussion and meeting with local community leaders and Local authorities and security.

	Community Engagement And Accountability	Budget	CHF 2,237
		Targeted Persons	75000
Indicators		Target	
Number of community feedback reports generated (Target: at least 2 reports)		2	
% of community feedback responded to		100	
Priority Actions:		• Orientation to volunteers on management of the situation monitoring room including feedback and rumour managementMedia Engagement on the role of Red Cross during & after Elections • Community feedback systems (including rumour and/or perception tracking) are established, and feedback acted upon and used to improve the operation • Volunteer feedback systems (including rumour and/or perception tracking) are established, and feedback acted upon and used to improve the operation • Online monitoring of social media comments and publication.	

	Secretariat Services	Budget	CHF 7,402
		Targeted Persons	363
Indicators		Target	
Monitoring mission		3	
coordination meeting attended		4	

Priority Actions:

- Secretariat role will be handle mainly by the delegation and will be mainly on security and situation monitoring.
- The delegation operation will also support and monitor that the preparedness of the NS is completed in the time before election.
- Adequate help will also be given in the various coordination and engagement meetings with local actors.
- Movement coordination will be maintain and will sustain the analysis.

About Support Services

How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.

330 Volunteers, 33 supervisors include staff in branches. 10 Personnel at the HQ mobilized to support and coordinate.

2 staff at IFRC delegation to support the implementation.

Will surge personnel be deployed? Please provide the role profile needed.

No. For preparedness, surge capacity will not be deployed. However, if the situation deteriorates, and the plan is revised, Surge capacity will be required to support on security and other technical areas.

If there is procurement, will it be done by National Society or IFRC?

The procurement of items or the provision of services will meet the required conditions, according to the needs of the affected population (external client) and/or the operational areas (internal client), to ensure adequate supplies and optimal performance. All purchases with support of Freetown cluster will be made locally in the country, and the National Society procedures, regulations and guidelines will be applied for the procurement process, considering the regulations of the DREF procedures and those of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. SLRCS will ensure vehicles and ambulances already mobilized for assistance since 10 August are ready to support further intervention by keeping maintenance.

How will this operation be monitored?

Reporting on the operation will be done in accordance with the IFRC minimum reporting standards, with an update after the first month and a final report to be made available three months after the end of the operation time-frame. SLRCS will oversee all operational, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting (PMER) aspects of the operation in the hotspot locations. The day-to-day monitoring of the operation will be the responsibility of the Operations manager at NS and delegation with the PMER Unit to ensure appropriate accountability, transparency and financial management of the operation. Contextualized monitoring tools and information collection format will be put in place and disseminated among the different branches staff and supervisors. The reporting will be done weekly from each branch from the launch to 18th June and a daily reports will be set from the week of election until the completion of the proclamations. The different branches will keep with the HQ operation management center two way communication flow facilitate by the set-up of a free line system among staff and volunteers to ease the information sharing and security updates.

Regular monitoring of the planned activities will be carried out by the operation team while scheduled monitoring visits will be made jointly by IFRC/SLRCS teams. But with consideration of the risk anticipated and scenario, specific tools adapted to a quick data update will be disseminate by the HQ to the branches and the main tools for reports and monitoring is expected to be phone and paper based. The risk of disruption of communication will make the monitoring from HQ difficult to achieve. As such, each branches will be strengthen and briefed to have a certain level of autonomy with actions and resources allocated in one shot from the launch of this operation. The key staff and volunteers supervisors will be properly briefed on the targets and objectives and will take lead on the weekly and daily reporting of the ERT deployments.

At the end of the operation, a lesson learnt workshop will be organized by SLRCS with IFRC and other stakeholders



of this operation to reflect on implementation. This workshop will allow for informed planning in future operations planned and implemented by the NS, but also will allow the SLRCS to reflect on its disaster readiness status.

Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation.

Achieving safe access to affected people and communities requires maintaining the positive image that civilians and state actors, who recognize the Red Cross as an impartial and independent entity. In the past, the Red Cross emblem has been affected by its improper use by unauthorized individuals or entities authorized to do so while conducting actions contrary to the Fundamental Principles; these actions jeopardized all humanitarian personnel's safety and the National Society's reputation. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify efforts to disseminate information regarding the actions and the International Movement's humanitarian principles to increase civilians' and state actors' awareness regarding the work that the Red Cross performs and strengthen the population's trust in humanitarian personnel. Thus, there is a need to develop a communication strategy focusing on disseminating key messages on emergency response and prioritizing messages on the humanitarian role of the SLRCS in managing and intervening in civil unrest (such as dissemination through social networks and mass messaging), including the monitoring of traditional and digital media (social networks) to evaluate the contents, messages and primary and secondary actors that are part of the collective public opinion.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

MDRSL015 - Sierra Leone Red Cross Election Preparedness

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	64,294
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	0
Health	52,393
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	9,665
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	2,237
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	107,710
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	7,402
National Society Strengthening	100,309
TOTAL BUDGET	172,004

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



Contact Information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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