



SARCS distributing emergency relief items fire victims in Hofland evacuation shelter in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province.

Appeal: MDRZA014	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 376,327	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Fire
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 2,779 people	People Targeted: 2,779 people	People Assisted: 2,779 people
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 27-07-2023	Operational End Date: 31-01-2024	Total Operating Timeframe: 6 months
Targeted Areas: Gauteng, Kwazulu-natal			

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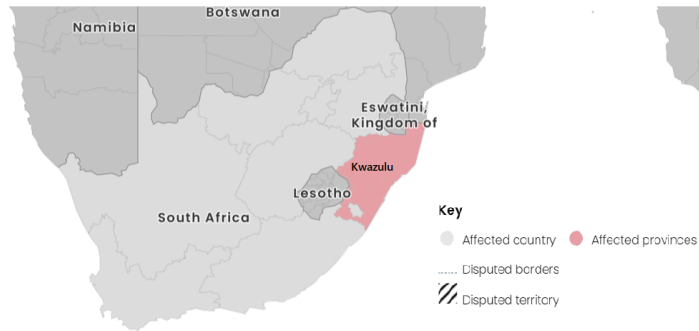
Description of the Event



+CIFRC

ZAF: Fire – 2023-07 – South Africa

July 22, 2023



The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities, Data sources: IFRC, OSM contributors, Map box.

Map Sources: ICRC, UN CODs ⓘ

Kwazulu Map

Date of event

17-07-2023

What happened, where and when?

In South Africa, unstructured fires are on the rise mostly in the informal settlements, especially during the winter season.

On July 16, 2023, a fire incident was reported in the KwaZulu-Natal province, specifically in the Kennedy Road informal settlement. This caused significant adverse impacts, leaving 2,357 people (647 children and 1,710 adults) displaced, with almost all their belongings swept away by the strong fire.

Another devastating fire blazed through one of the five-storey dilapidated buildings in Johannesburg CBD in Gauteng province in the early hours of August 31, 2023. The Johannesburg Metro indicated that the building had been invaded as it did not meet the standards of safe shelter due to its dilapidated state. This was one of the major urban fire in the city in years, leaving 76 deaths as reported by BBC, about 175 households homeless, about 422 people.





@SARCS on the ground for situation update on 31 August Johannesburg fire



Devastation caused by the fires

Scope and Scale

The two fire incidents left around a thousand families homeless with significant losses that required urgent support to recover these sudden losses.

- Fire incident at the Kennedy Road informal communities in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province, was the worst fire disaster in recent years.
- Rapid assessments conducted by the SARCS KZN provincial response team on July 17 revealed that approximately 2,357 people were affected, including 647 children and 1,710 adults. This was categorized into 1,213 households, with more than 1,101 households having their dwellings demolished and 112 households partially demolished. Two deaths and five injuries were confirmed. Affected people were relocated to community hall. The devastating fire damaged more than 1,101 homes, displacing over a thousand people.
- 3 evacuation centers were established and later families moved out for most of them.

The second fire erupted in August 2023, engulfing an illegally occupied building in Johannesburg, Gauteng province.

- This fire left about 175 households, comprising 422 individuals, homeless and in dire need.
- It was established that 98% of the affected population consisted of undocumented migrants, with 72% being men who were often the primary breadwinners supporting their families abroad. The tragedy revealed the dire circumstances faced by undocumented migrants in informal settlements, especially during the winter season, and highlighted the urgent need for support.
- 01 center was set-up in the early stage of the disaster, at the public town hall.

South Africa Red Cross deployed the emergency response team for immediate humanitarian assistance at the early hours of these incidents. In both situations, people affected by the fire incidents were evacuated to centers. Many men, and unaccompanied children, especially in Johannesburg, were affected. SARCS provided Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Restoring Family Links (RFL) services, which included free phone call services, tracing, and case management. Additional services, including food, clothing, blankets, and mattresses, were also provided to the affected people. Immediate WASH interventions were essential to ensure access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene materials, which were critical in preventing the spread of diseases and promoting health in the affected areas.

National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?	No
Please provide a brief description of those additional activities	-



IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	<p>The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) supported SARCS through its Country Cluster Delegation based in Pretoria. This cluster provided technical assistance through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), aimed at helping SARCS to manage the response to disaster emergencies, including the two fire incidents. Additionally, it ensured the implementation of recovery programs for the affected individuals. IFRC also supports SARCS with resource mobilization to enhance the design of response plans and the implementation of the responses.</p> <p>A surge was deployed to complement the delegation and cover the monitoring of activities in respective branches.</p>
Participating National Societies	<p>There were no PNS involved or contributed directly to this response.</p>

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

SARCS also engaged in close coordination with the ICRC who provided assistance in the provision of support in the Protection of Family Links (PFL) to affected communities. The PFL services that were provided included phone calls, internet connection and phone charging services.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	<p>No</p>
National authorities	<p>The government had ensured that displaced individuals were accommodated in community halls and had successfully provided mobile toilet facilities to support those affected. Through the City of Johannesburg Metro, the government had also requested support from non-governmental organizations to help meet the basic needs of the affected people. Local government authorities had been leading the decisions and actions regarding shelter arrangements.</p>
UN or other actors	<p>The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) had reached out to UN agencies, but there had never been a commitment from them for this response. Other organizations, such as Meals on Wheels, had assisted with providing hot dinners to the affected people in Johannesburg. Additionally, Gift of the Givers had provided blankets to some of the affected people in both provinces.</p>

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

Following the fire incidents, SARCS conducted joint assessments with the government through its local municipality and disaster management centres at the district level to assess the impacts and determine the needs of the affected people. Additionally, SARCS participated actively in Joint Operations Committee (JOC) meetings led by the district municipality Disaster Management Centres (DMC) in both provinces. The aim to engage in these meetings were to ensure there was a well-coordinated response and recovery interventions that minimize duplication of efforts provided to the same community as well as identify the most pressing needs in affected communities. The needs analysis was constantly updated to include more detailed information based on current and potential needs, disaster impact, access, and protection risks. The assessment of needs was carried out through observation, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs). Some of the key needs identified were Cash, food, school uniforms, water supply, hygiene packs, mental health support due to the stress of losing belongings.



Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

- For the Johannesburg fire, 175 families were placed in three shelters: Impilo (20 families), Khayaletu (36 families), and Hofland (147 families). However, others were hesitant to join in the evacuation centers established, due to their irregular migration status, fearing deportation.
- In KZN 1213 families were accommodated in the evacuation centres. Some individuals sought refuge with friends, and efforts were made to maintain communication with them.

Following both provinces fire incidents, the families were oriented in identified evacuation sites by the authorities. The sudden event of fires left the families without any means of protection and in need of basic commodities to survive, especially in the cold season that was already starting. In both Kennedy Road and Johannesburg, the affected populations urgently needed essential household items, such as blankets and mattresses. There was also the need to access a more sustainable shelter solutions that could also mitigate any protection and dignity concerns.

The National Society's (NS) plan did not cover shelter construction, as this need could only be met through sustainable building solutions, which required government action to allocate safe spaces for displaced households in evacuation centers. Sustainable housing interventions by the government were crucial to minimize the risks associated with such hazards. There was also a pressing need for "build back better" campaigns & fire prevention to ensure that the affected communities were aware of safe building practices and safe installations to prevent similar incidents.

Considering the above, the NS focused on the relief support and basic needs. Furthermore, NS provided the fire prevention training for staff and volunteers on fire awareness to support the community leaders and authorities to raise awareness in the communities and reduce the impact of future fire disasters. On the sustainable solutions, the NS, in its auxiliary role, continued to engage with the government and partners to achieve these goals.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

People's livelihoods were greatly affected because they lost all their belongings due to the fire blaze. Basic needs like food and clothing were greatly needed by displaced people. SARCS provided hot meals for 13 weeks to 2875 people to reduce the risk of being exposed to more vulnerabilities as they try to fend for themselves. Even if the NS was providing hot meals, these do not cover specific needs for babies and infants. The majority of people expressed the need for the kitchen sets to help them when they intend to move out of the evacuation centers.



Multi purpose cash grants

Although the affected people received in-kind donations like blankets, recycled clothes and hot meals, there were needs identified for the provision of cash grants empower and enable them the choice to prioritize their needs and restore their dignity. In the needs analysis and possible intervention assessment, it was highlighting the repeated fires recorded in the affected areas, which had significantly strained the capacity of partner organizations to provide assistance, including government shelter support. Additionally, multiple needs were expressed, particularly in the areas of shelter and other sectors. Given that 98% of the affected people in Johannesburg were undocumented migrants, there was a necessary level of sensitivity to consider when providing cash, which SARCS was providing unique code as a form of identification. Some incidents of violence occurred during assistance efforts for affected communities in Kwa-Zulu natal where the community was complaining that how people who were recently affected get assistance, while previous victims were still waiting for shelter support—a situation was driven by the limitations in shelter assistance.

With these considerations in mind, and given the potential for inter-community conflict, it was essential to maintain neutrality and prioritize humanitarian efforts despite limited resources. Therefore, SARCS decided to provide multipurpose cash grants, giving communities the ability to set their own priorities without the risk of generating complaints.





Health

MHPSS (mental health and psychosocial support) services were a vital to address the emotional and psychological trauma experienced by the affected individuals and communities. The devastating loss of homes and belongings, as well as displacement and uncertainty among people had severe and long-term effects on mental health. SARCS ensured that victims receive psychosocial services first and were referred for further services if necessary.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Good hygiene practices had been lacking due to limited materials, particularly among women and girls. There was a need to provide hygiene kits to those affected.

Safe water was not identified as a priority need, as most people, being in urban areas and relocated not far from the affected settlements, still had access to tap water that had been available before the fire. The provision of hygiene kits would also facilitate water storage. The affected individuals were in great need of hygiene packs, with adolescent girls, youth, and women requiring an urgent supply of sanitary towels



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

With a disaster of this nature, where in Johannesburg, 12 children had died among the 76 people reported, and others were hospitalized, it was important to prioritize child safeguarding. Ensuring that children who were separated from their parents were profiled and referred to relevant departments for additional support was crucial. Emphasis was placed on SGBV prevention and mitigation, especially with people being confined in evacuation centers.

These strategies included establishing safe spaces and community-based protection networks that offered security and support. Raising awareness through targeted campaigns, particularly addressing gender-based violence and discrimination, was crucial. Additionally, inclusivity and sensitivity to gender dynamics and literacy levels were essential principles to ensure no one was left behind in the recovery process.

Child safeguarding was a critical component, especially since some children had tragically lost their lives. Specific considerations for persons with disabilities were also identified. Lastly, strengthening referral pathways through partnerships with other entities was crucial. These collaborations ensured that affected individuals received comprehensive support, including specialized services. This multi-faceted approach ensured that the response was inclusive, respectful of cultural and religious practices, and attentive to the unique needs of the most vulnerable groups.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Community Engagement and Accountability has been at the core of SARCS response interventions. For instance, during the response Mostly in Johannesburg fire affected people were hesitant to engage with government officials in fear of their status of migrant in irregular situation. However, they have been free to engage with non-governmental organizations like SARCS and share their plight. Furthermore, SARCS facilitated coordination meetings with different actors involved in fire response to complement each other instead of giving same relief items but also shared responsibilities in responding to the needs of the affected people avoid duplication of efforts. CEA orientation was conducted to help volunteers in supporting CEA intervention such as Community Feedback Mechanism tool which help to ensure that relevant information is passed to and from the community. In addition, volunteers assisted to raise more awareness and advocate for provision of safe shelter and safe settlements. The FGDs were conducted to share information and collect feedback in the community. A community engagement strategy was also included to enhance and advocate with community representatives and leaders of the host and migrants as a mitigation measure also to the possible sensitivity on the explain context.



Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

This DREF allocation aimed at supporting 2,779 people who lost their homes in the fire incidents at the Kennedy Road informal settlement in KwaZulu-Natal and the Johannesburg building fire. This objective included 2357 people that were reached with urgent support in livelihoods (Such as provision of hot meals and cash) and basic needs (such as food, blankets, mattresses, and clothing), WASH (hygiene packs and sanitary towels), and shelter support (such as smoke alarms and kitchen kits). Additionally, the allocation included fire prevention measures and advocacy for relevant solutions post the DREF response.

Operation strategy rationale

The operational strategy was designed to address the needs identified during the Rapid Needs Assessment in KwaZulu-Natal and Johannesburg following the fire incidents. This DREF was launched to provide immediate response interventions to meet the shelter, health, WASH, livelihoods, and basic needs of those affected. The following intervention pillars were established and extended to the Johannesburg response after the second fire outbreak on August 30, 2023:

- Detailed assessments in the affected areas were conducted 24H following the events and this allocation has replenished the funding.
- Immediate relief efforts included the distribution of blankets, mattresses, and hot meals.
- Smoke detectors/alarms were provided to enhance safety.
- Kitchen kits were distributed to assist with daily living needs.
- Food access was supported at the sites with hot meal distribution for at least five weeks.
- Cash assistance for Johannesburg affected families
- Mobile toilet with gender separation to be installed - 24 in total. 14 in Kennedy 3 sites and 10 in Johannesburg.
- Psychological support services (PSS) were facilitated.
- NS team benefited from some capacity strengthening. Mainly on disease prevention key messages; Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), fire awareness, Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) were conducted.
- Visibility materials and protective clothing were provided to the operational response team.
- Advocacy efforts with relevant stakeholders were strengthened to promote fire prevention, sustainable solutions, and reliable mechanisms to reduce future outbreaks.

NS quickly deployed the first aid, PSS and meals distribution in the areas affected. The NS deployed extra services for messaging, prevention, psychological first aid, and first aid to ensure a comprehensive and dignified response.

Procurement was completed for the first Kennedy fire and the update of the operation served to complement the procurement and extend the assistance to Johannesburg Fire. SARCS, procured relief items such as blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, and hygiene packs. The quantities purchased for the distribution in the Kennedy affected communities were finally not distributed due to social unrest in the Kennedy Informal Settlement. During the operation's implementation, SARCS faced difficulties distributing blankets, mattresses, and hygiene packs due to tensions and social unrest among government officials at the Local Municipality over service delivery issues. These safety concerns led the government to advise the NS to terminate the operation. Consequently, adjustments were made to the DREF scope for the specific items distributions. The NS redirected the distribution of these materials to respond to the flood-affected areas in KwaZulu-Natal as targeted under MDRZA015 operation update 1 (DREF for Western Cape floods).

These items that were redirected from the MDRZA014 DREF to MDRZA015 floods response included: 352 mattresses, 352 blankets, 1,213 hygiene packs, and 1,213 kitchen sets. Following the unrests, these items were stored at SARCS provincial stores in KZN and distributed to flood-affected families, reaching 1,001 people in eThekweni, uMgungundlovu, uMkhanyakude. With these changes, SARCS strategically allocated resources to mitigate risks of perception and mis-communication around the different interventions. The trained CEA focal points were also active on the ground to ensure interventions met the minimum standards and feedbacks are collected as one way to ensure community perception is being monitored & managed. With that approach and the coordination with the local authorities, the intervention adjustment went smoothly.

Awareness campaigns on fire incidents and health risks were scaled up in evacuation centers and host communities, supported by a trained team and appropriate printing of IEC materials to mitigate the risk of future fires and water-related diseases.

Multi-purpose cash assistance was provided to those affected by the Johannesburg fire, along with awareness on using the cash for immediate priority needs. The cash process involved the community and was implemented through a mobile money modality. Families receiving the cash had the flexibility purchase preferred items at their preferred markets/shops or address rental and other priority needs.



Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

Under the DREF, SARCS aimed to reach 2,779 people being 1,388 affected households (HHs). Per location this represented:

- 1,213 HHs affected in Kennedy Road
- 175 HHs in Johannesburg.

Since all the affected individuals located at these sites, it was crucial to avoid creating conflict, particularly as all the affected families were homeless. Sensitivity was also needed due to claims from host communities regarding the planned assistance for migrants affected in Johannesburg. SARCS provided equitable assistance to the Johannesburg families through Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) while maintaining the initially planned relief assistance in Kennedy, which had been agreed upon.

Those staying in shelters, specifically in Johannesburg received additional support because they had been identified, registered, and could be verified in those shelters. Although the government had profiled citizens for potential relief, the situation on the ground was sensitive. Specific interventions from non-governmental organizations risked creating divisions between citizens and non-citizens. There was a threat of social unrest, making it essential for response interventions to target all affected individuals.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The operation was targeting all the people who were directly impacted by the fire. This includes those who have suffered damage and loss of livelihoods, and disruption of essential services targeting the elderly over 60 years, people with disabilities, Pregnant and lactating mothers, child-headed households, and low-income households with children under 5 years old, including those with no means of income and displaced to the evacuation centre, particularly those assessed as most impacted and exposed to further harm. SARCS implemented a verification process that involved key stakeholders such as DSD and the traditional leadership council to confirm the selected households and ensure that the selection criteria were adhered to. The selection criteria were widely communicated through trusted channels, including community engagement forums led by traditional leaders and local authorities, to minimize community tensions and provide clarity to those selected or not selected. NS staff and volunteers collected feedback and complaints from targeted households during the selection process and throughout the operation, using different channels including during the needs assessment. The feedback was shared and analysed at headquarters to improve the selection process and criteria as needed, and to address any complaints regarding the selection of community members. Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) played a crucial role in this response, with community members involved in the development of selection criteria to ensure understanding of the targeting and beneficiary selection process. The National Society assisted a total of 2875 people (575 households) following the Kennedy Road and Johannesburg fire to assist them in rebuilding or recover from disaster shock with dignity.

Total Targeted Population

Women	971	Rural	-
Girls (under 18)	330	Urban	100%
Men	1,151	People with disabilities (estimated)	2%
Boys (under 18)	327		
Total targeted population	2,779		

Risk and Security Considerations

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

Risk	Mitigation action
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Budget limitations linked to prices hikes and currency re-evaluation	The national society ensured revising budgets due to inflation and submitted for approvals.
Sensitivity and complaints arise in the communities in the Johannesburg context between host and migrants.	As part of the management of sensitivity, the response targeted both native South Africans and migrants. The cash covered the shelter needs for rentals in different areas.
Social unrest as all affected people want to benefit from the intervention.	Through community engagement with affected people, mapped response measures with other humanitarian actors.
Poor Cash redeem by beneficiaries following losses of documents and mobile	The existing challenges with communities to be assisted through cash include the unavailability of identity document, sim card and phones. Considering this situation, the easiest way to process for cash assistance being then the use of cash cards.
Financial constraint due to Ongoing fire breaking	The NS continued to approach various organizations and companies for more support to cater for the affected populations.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

The affected areas were in an informal settlement in KZN and an abandoned building in Johannesburg. In addition to that sensitive context, there have been specific tensions between government officials at the Local Municipality and communities in KZN where the affected Kennedy informal settlements is. The unrests were motivated by the complaint from communities on the service delivery from past humanitarian crisis. This situation led to safety concerns, prompting the government to advise the NS to terminate the operation. Consequently, adjustments were made to the DREF scope to include the distribution of these materials to flood-affected areas in KWAZULU Natal, which were hit by floods following a fire incident, utilizing unused stocks from MDRZA014 to respond to the floods in other area in KZN.

The NS made efforts to ensure that the response upheld the RC principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and universality during this response to avoid social unrest. The KZN distributions were not done as planned because some social uprisings were brewing due to aid distributions but none of the movement staff and volunteers were affected.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No

Implementation



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Budget: CHF 112,262

Targeted Persons: 2,779

Assisted Persons: 2,779

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of mattresses distributed	1,563	1,211
# of blankets distributed	1,563	1,211
# of printed IEC materials distributed on fire awareness	2,000	2,000

# of volunteers who attended the Fire awareness training	40	46
# of Fire awareness training	2	2
# of Fire awareness campaigns for staff and volunteers conducted	2	2
# of Safe Shelter awareness campaigns conducted	2	2
# of people supported with kitchen sets	2,779	1,566
# of needs assessments conducted	2	2

Narrative description of achievements

- SARCS conducted a detailed needs assessment to identify the needs and vulnerabilities, damages of the affected households in both provinces.
- For shelter purposes, government established evacuation centres to accommodate the displaced people in both provinces. Even though some affected people were hesitant to join the shelters because of their irregular migration status in the country and they feared that they might be deported specifically in Gauteng province. Most of the individuals accommodated at the shelter were provided with blankets and mattresses.
- SARCS under this priority was able provided 2779 people (1383 Males and 1396 Females) with blankets and mattresses each households receiving 2 blankets and mattresses out of planned 1,563, the remaining blankets and Mattresses. In addition, SARCS distributed kitchen sets reaching 1,566 people from the prepositioned stock.
- On Fire awareness, 46 volunteers were trained instead of 40 to support the deliverable of key messages on fire prevention among the local leaders, the public places, the areas around informal settlement and in the evacuation site. More volunteers due to more needs.

In KZN

- Only 1,211 blankets, 1,211 mattresses, and 314 kitchen sets were distributed due to social unrest that erupted between government officials and residents of the Kennedy informal settlement in KZN, with the remainder being distributed in flood-affected areas of the region. Same context already indicated above.
- The Kitchen sets were not distributed due to the same reported unrest between the local municipality and the affected people.
- On the fire prevention awareness and educative messages, SARCS was able to Print 2000 fire-prevention materials/leaflets to advocate about the Fire awareness and prevention and accountability.

Lessons Learnt

- NS need to strengthen its coordination effort with government line ministries to better help the affected people regarding shelter and settlement during emergency responses. As it will assist reducing overcrowding in the evacuation shelters.
- There is need to leverage the community engagement & institutional engagement in Kennedy to enhance the understanding of Red Cross role & raise more awareness, especially in the sensitive areas. This institutional engagement must contribute to raise awareness among the government officials on the urgency to find ways that will mitigate the recurrence of similar sensitive context. and provide sustainable shelters solutions.
- Pre-emptively identifying and setting up designated safe shelters prior the emergency occur is crucial. Doing so allows actors to create gender-segregated spaces during preparatory measures.

Challenges

- Procured material such as 352 blankets, 352 mattresses and 1,213 kitchen sets were not distributed to the Kennedy informal settlement due to social unrest and tension between the residents and government officials. Displaced people refused to be evacuated due to not knowing where to go, even after they were provided with multi-purpose cash voucher.
- Overcrowding in the shelters specifically in Johannesburg, affected the quality and availability of materials, which caused balancing cost-effectiveness with safety and durability posed as a challenge.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Budget: CHF 15,208



Targeted Persons: 2,779

Assisted Persons: 2,779

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people assisted with hot meal	2,779	2,779
#of weeks for hot meal provision (in both locations)	13	13
#of weeks for hot meal provision in Kennedy	5	5
#of weeks for hot meal provision in JOHANNESBURG	8	8

Narrative description of achievements

Following the recent fires in two provinces, the NS extended hot meal provision for an additional two months (8 weeks) at three centers hosting the affected families in Johannesburg. This effort complemented the single meal provided by another NGO. Meanwhile, fire victims at Kennedy Road received hot meals for five weeks, with three meals distributed daily in both provinces. NS was able to reach 2779 people (1396 females and 1383 Males).

Lessons Learnt

Advocating for sustained investment in livelihoods development and aligning with international best practices can enhance impact.

Challenges

Some beneficiaries complained about other beneficiaries selling the food parcels provided to the community near where the evacuation Centre was located specifically in Johannesburg.



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 40,048

Targeted Persons: 175

Assisted Persons: 387

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#of families assisted with MPC	175	164
#PMD conducted for cash	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

• The planned card-based modality with card exchanged to cash intervention was not implemented due to high logistical costs, security risks, and human resource constraints. As a result, the National Society (NS) opted for a mobile money intervention to assist families affected by the Johannesburg fire. The initiative targeted 175 households (422 people). NS successfully provided cash assistance to 164 households, reaching a total of 387 people, which accounts for 94% of the intended beneficiaries. Each household received a once-off multi-purpose cash transfer of R4,000

- Only 7 households were unable to redeem their cash due to incorrect phone numbers provided by the beneficiaries. As a result, they were unable to access their funds, leading to the money being returned to the financial service provider and subsequently transferred back to the NS account. However, the repayment of these funds was not completed because the DREF had already closed, requiring NS to return the funds to the IFRC.
- Post-distribution monitoring revealed that many beneficiaries felt the cash assistance was insufficient to meet their expenses, especially given the high cost of living in urban areas like Johannesburg. This concern was particularly noted following the Johannesburg fires, as the cash voucher distribution was limited there.

Lessons Learnt

- Tailored Cash Assistance: A uniform cash assistance approach may not effectively address the diverse needs of affected individuals, particularly when considering varying family sizes. It's essential to determine cash values based on comprehensive assessments that account for household size and specific vulnerabilities.
- Enhanced Monitoring Mechanisms: Strengthening monitoring strategies at both branch and provincial levels is crucial for the effective implementation of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programs. Robust monitoring enables accurate assessment of program effectiveness, identification of gaps, and timely adjustments to strategies, ensuring that assistance reaches those in need efficiently.
- Capacity Building for Staff and Volunteers: Investing in the training and development of staff and volunteers in designing, implementing, and monitoring cash interventions is vital. A lack of expertise in these areas can lead to suboptimal program outcomes. Building capacity ensures that teams are well-equipped to deliver effective and responsive assistance.

Challenges

- The cash intervention main challenge was around the beneficiaries contacts. Some beneficiaries did not have phones, but used their friends and neighbours' phones, where they keep changing their phone numbers. Some beneficiaries delayed in redeeming cash vouchers timely.
- Some beneficiaries complained of money not being enough and refused to evacuate from the shelters due to family size.



Budget: CHF 28,490

Targeted Persons: 2,779

Assisted Persons: 2,779

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers supporting PFA	40	40
# of people supported with PFA	2,779	560

Narrative description of achievements

NS trained 40 staff and volunteers on PFA to help people in distress condition. This training helped the volunteers to provide awareness messages to the affected people.

2779 people were supported with mental health and psychosocial services/Psychosocial first aid in emergency. PSS messages was provided to 2357 people in Kennedy and extended to 422 people in Johannesburg centers. SARCS provided first aid to those who were injured and referred others to clinics and hospitals for more specialized care in both provinces. In the evacuation camps, RCCE was strengthened through awareness sessions on fires and safer shelters. Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS) complemented the material support which was provided to people affected in the evacuation centres. PSS staff and volunteers provided PFA assistance to individuals and families in distress to restore their calmness and hope, while also identifying people those with severe medical and psychological needs for referral to specialized services.

Follow-ups were conducted to determine how families were coping up as well as provided feedback on the need for livelihoods and WASH interventions on emerging needs at the family and community levels. The psychosocial approach aided in mobilizing and engaging community leaders, as well as promoting the safety and dignity of vulnerable people. The following actions were undertaken provision of MHPSS/PFA sessions to community as needed by trained 40 volunteers.



Lessons Learnt

• NS need to strengthen its Working relationship with local health departments and other agencies who are working with migrants in established temporary shelters for displaced individuals, to ensure they have access to basic health necessities.

Challenges

• Some of the fire victims who had injuries, refused to go to the clinic to get their wound treated, due to fear of being deported as they did not have proper documentation.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 78,424

Targeted Persons: 2,779

Assisted Persons: 1,566

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers supporting WASH activities	40	40
# of hygiene packs distributed	1,388	175

Narrative description of achievements

•Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion services were included as part of the response to the 1,388 HH targeted. This included the distribution of essential hygiene-related materials such as hygiene kits. 1,213 for Kennedy families and 157 for Johannesburg. In Johannesburg, 175 hygiene kits were successfully distributed to affected individuals with the support of partner organizations. In addition, NS installed a total of 14 toilet in Kennedy fires and 10 toilets across 5 shelters in JHB.

However, the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) encountered challenges in distributing hygiene packs in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), specifically in the Kennedy Road informal settlement. The distribution was hindered by social unrest and conflict between local government officials and fire survivors, stemming from ongoing service delivery issues in the area. The unrest raised significant safety concerns, leading government authorities to advise SARCS to terminate the operation in that location. As a result, adjustments were made redirect the 1213 kits to flood-affected areas in KwaZulu-Natal under the MDRZA015 operation, ensuring that critical hygiene support reached communities in need despite the operational challenges.

- A total of 40 volunteers were trained and helped to implement WASH activities.
- Safe and clean water was provided in evacuation shelters and distributed household with bottled water and safe storage items. The NS was able to provide evacuation shelters with 14 emergency toilets designed in consultation with the community for proper waste management.

Lessons Learnt

- Need to intensify CEA in Kennedy and strengthen collaboration between government officials and residents is critical and need to be treated as a matter of urgency.
- Conduct more awareness raising in the communities on the role of the Red Cross and its auxiliary role during disasters could help mitigate the expectations and easily promote the principles in case of sensitive response environment.
- Overcrowded conditions can strain existing sanitation systems, increase the risk of disease transmission, compromise personal hygiene practices, Privacy and dignity of the affected during emergencies, especially for women and girls. Due to lack of separate and safe sanitation facilities which at times may lead to discomfort, and potential safety risks to the affected people.



Challenges

• SARCS could not distribute 1,213 procured hygiene packs due to social unrest between residents and Government officials from the local municipality regarding lack of service delivery in Kennedy Informal Settlement.

Overcrowding conditions in the shelters specifically in Johannesburg has caused strain existing sanitation systems, as Some of the affected people accommodated in the shelters ended up damaging the water supply taps which compromise personal hygiene practices as both men and women were sharing the same bathing areas, which also compromised Privacy and dignity of the affected especially for women and girls.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 1,014

Targeted Persons: 2,779

Assisted Persons: 2,779

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of staff and volunteers who attended the PGI briefing on Minimum Standards for PGI in Emergencies	45	46
# of PGI briefing on Minimum Standards for PGI in emergencies conducted for staff and volunteers in response team	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

• 46 Volunteers (20 volunteers Kennedy fire and 26 volunteers Johannesburg fire) participated in a 1-day PGI briefing session on Minimum Standards for PGI in emergencies to equip them with the necessary skills they needed to be able to support the affected communities. The Child safeguarding and PGI awareness sessions were incorporated with the health awareness sessions that were done during the Fire Safety awareness campaign at the evacuation centers which accumulatively reached 2779 people. The Promotion of acceptance in the two affected areas, as well as peace messages were enhanced through the FGD during volunteers' visits. With support from ICRC 2,430 people (1,627 Female and 803 Male) were supported with protection of family links (PFL) services (free phone calls, charging, internet connection, RC messaging and referral system for further services. SARCS has a strong working relationship with the Department of Social Development (DSD) which provides support in the areas of MHPSS and PSEA.

Lessons Learnt

- NS needs to ensure that the feedback mechanisms are to be set up and include a confidential mechanism to receive, handle and respond to sensitive complaints, including reports of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and potential sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by NS staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring the safety of vulnerable population such as women, children, elderly and people with disabilities can be difficult in a chaotic and unstable situation. It is of utmost importance to analyze past emergencies to identify areas of improvement and adapt strategies based on lessons learned.

Challenges

• Mass displacement and migration that lead to overcrowding in the evacuation shelter that put vulnerable population at risk of further marginalization and exploitation. Continuous awareness of the movement conduct and do no harm principle for affected population and volunteers. GBV awareness campaigns for staff, volunteers, and affected populations.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 14,803

Targeted Persons: 2,779



Assisted Persons: 2,357

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#of people that confirmed they received fire awareness messages	2,779	2,357
# of advocacy meeting organize on fire incident prevention and response planning	6	5
% of community feedbacks collected and addressed	100	84
# of community feedback methods used	4	4
# of staff and volunteers who attended the CEA orientation	75	65
# of CEA orientations conducted for staff and volunteers	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

• 65 people (25 staff and 40 volunteers) were capacitated with necessary skills on fire awareness, risk factors, prevention and immediate life-saving guidance in both provinces who were supporting the intervention. At least 84% of people (2,357) engaged through community feedback collected confirmed that they were satisfied with the services provided and their needs were addressed including receipt of fire awareness messages. SARCS continued to facilitate its participatory approach of Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) with affected communities. Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) was integral components of these response interventions. Community participation and involvement was prioritized, using existing community structures and engaging key stakeholders like community leaders. Special considerations were given to individuals with specific needs. Such as child headed and people with disability.

Engagement with the National Disaster Management Agency and civil protection to potentially establish and train fire management committees capable of rapid prevention and response to fire outbreaks.

Advocacy and collaboration on innovative fire prevention methods (such as fire sensors, evacuation route planning, and participatory sessions with the community) to significantly reduce fire incidents. The IFRC contributed technical guidance and action plans—both immediate and long-term.

Engagement with the government and IFRC for administrative and technical support to implement urban risk reduction actions addressing these risks.

Educative sessions were planned in coordination with the Department of Social Development and Fire Services, focusing on fire risk awareness, consequences, prevention, community systems, and early actions.

Lessons Learnt

- Effective communication is essential for successful emergency management and anticipate on any potential tension.
- Maintaining public trust while managing crises requires transparency, timely updates, and effective communication.

Challenges

Social unrest, civil disturbances, and protests further complicated emergency response efforts, particularly in the KZN province.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 20,430

Targeted Persons: 65

Assisted Persons: 65



Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of monitoring visits conducted by IFRC	4	4
#of surge deployed	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

In response to the Kennedy Road fire, the IFRC head of delegation and the National Society (NS) disaster manager visited the affected province to supervise the implementation of DREF activities. Concurrently, the South Africa Red Cross Society (SARCS) programmes team, led by an IFRC senior disaster manager, conducted four technical support and field monitoring visits in Johannesburg. These visits were carried out in collaboration with IFRC departments, including Finance, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER), Disaster Management, Communications, and Health, to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the response in both provinces.

The IFRC and SARCS technical & support team were regularly monitoring the sectoral objectives and work plan. The teams collaborated closely to provide comprehensive technical support across various domains. This included:

- Finance: Ensuring proper financial systems were set up and implemented for the operation, with assistance from the Cluster Senior Finance Officer.
- PMER: Developing and utilizing effective monitoring and reporting tools to track the progress and impact of the operation.
- Disaster Management, Communications, and Health: Providing specialized support to enhance the overall response efforts.

The collaborative efforts between the IFRC, SARCS, and various technical & support teams have significantly contributed to the effective implementation of the DREF operation in response to the Kennedy Road fire. The continuous monitoring, technical support, and coordination have ensured that the response activities were carried out efficiently, addressing the needs of the affected communities and enhancing the overall disaster preparedness of the NS.

Monitoring also included:

- Regular updates on the response that were done via biweekly online team meetings , facilitating continuous communication and coordination.
- Surge Support: One Surge personnel was deployed to assist with the coordination of shelter-related strategies. This deployment aimed to enhance the capacity of the NS in managing future fire incidents and improve overall preparedness.

Lessons Learnt

- The National Society (NS) should enhance its resource mobilization strategy to ensure the availability of internal and unearmarked funds which can be used to provide additional resources during emergencies while waiting for operational funds to be disbursed.

Challenges

- The delay in disbursing funds for the operation resulted in delay for the National Society (NS) to implement the operation with immediate effect. Due to NS's lack of insufficient designated funds, there were challenges in procuring necessary response materials for the affected communities in a timely manner.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 65,649

Targeted Persons: 46

Assisted Persons: 65

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people attending a Lessons Learned workshop	50	50



# of Lessons Learned workshops conducted	1	1
# of volunteers insured	40	40
# of visibility materials procured and distributed	70	70
# of staff and volunteers who received Protective clothes for rain	40	40
# of coordination and monitoring visits conducted	12	8
#of coordination workshop to enhance the shelter and fire management in fire humanitarian response	2	2

Narrative description of achievements

A total of Eight (8) sessions of monitoring visits were conducted by both branch and national office in collaboration with IFRC for field supervision, coordination, and monitoring. SARCS had a refresher training for 25 Staff and 40 volunteers were trained on disaster response, basic fire. SARCS ensured the operation was strategized based on the availability and latest assessment and operational data.

A total of 40 NS volunteers and staff deployment to support the intervention were provided with Visibility materials like SARCS branded jelsays /bibs, t-shirts and hats for field visibility.

SARCS ensured that Coordination with fire services and Disaster management agency in both provinces. Furthermore, NS was able to conduct 8 technical support and field monitoring visits which 4 field visit they conducted in collaboration with IFRC finance, PMER, Disaster, Communications and health to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of this response in both provinces. A lessons learned workshop was held with volunteers, staff, community representatives, and stakeholders. The workshop highlighted the successes of the intervention, challenges encountered, and areas improvement. The findings were as follows: The unsatisfaction of beneficiaries on distribution of CVA which include delays and incomplete distribution, with some registered beneficiaries not receiving their funds. Additionally, the Communication gaps the need for accurate and timely reporting to reflect on the ground realities. Transparency at all levels was lacking, leading to inefficiencies, and failure to meet reporting deadlines.

Lessons Learnt

Ns should strengthen its resource mobilisation to ensure that they have undesignated funds that will assist during emergencies in future responses, while waiting for Funds disbursement from IFRC.

Challenges

The delay in disbursing funds for the operation forced the National Society (NS) to proceed immediately despite lacking sufficient designated funds. As a result, the NS encountered challenges in procuring the necessary response materials for the affected communities in a timely manner.



Financial Report

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRZA014 - South Africa - Fire

Operating Timeframe: 27 Jul 2023 to 31 Jan 2024

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023-2024	Operation	MDRZA014
Budget Timeframe	2023-2024	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 12/Feb/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	376,327
DREF Response Pillar	376,327
Expenditure	-322,412
Closing Balance	53,915

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction	3,281	-2,846	6,127
AOF2 - Shelter	111,283	119,329	-8,046
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	54,775	42,892	11,882
AOF4 - Health	28,242	11,073	17,169
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	77,740	82,251	-4,511
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion	1,005	256	749
AOF7 - Migration		-3	3
Area of focus Total	276,325	252,953	23,372
SF11 - Strengthen National Societies	79,750	57,661	22,089
SF12 - Effective international disaster management		-5	5
SF13 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SF14 - Ensure a strong IFRC	20,252	11,803	8,448
Strategy for implementation Total	100,002	69,459	30,542
Grand Total	376,327	322,412	53,915

[Click here for the complete financial report](#)

Please explain variances (if any)

The IFRC-DREF allocation to this response was CHF 376,327. Expenditures were realized within the timeframe for CHF 322,412. Closing Balance of 53,915 will return to the DREF pot following the publication of this report. This balance is breakdown in various variances explained as follow.

- Relief items, Construction, Supplies: Variance is -2 569 (1.1%) variance is mainly the result of currency rate difference for various date of transaction.
- Logistics, Transport & Storage: Variance is 17 386 (73.8%) because the social unrest occurring during implementation led to delays in

fully implementing this budget line.

- Personnel: Variance is 38 886 (76.5%) because: 1)IFRC deployed surge (ops manager) to support the NS on acquired Surge support for one month (December 2024).
- For the international staff variances, it is linked to surges deployment cost not fully absorbed. The fire expert was not dispatched due to the unavailability of the necessary expertise.
- Workshops & Training: Variance is 5 830 (34.5%) because Through collaboration with other stakeholders SARCS managed to negotiate for central training venue which was offered at great discount resulting in big savings under this budget line.
- General Expenditure: Variance is -8908 (29.9%) because The payment for cash vouchers was once off as most of them were migrants who were not able to be tracked after they were engaged by their relatives to relocate. Some had lost their phones during the disaster and it was difficult to trace them as they were on the move.
- Indirect Costs: Variance is 3 291 (14.3%) because The NS did not fully implement as planned hence a reduction in the PSSR costs.



Contact Information

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

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[Click here for reference](#)



DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023-2024	Operation	MDRZA014
Budget Timeframe	2023-2024	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 12/Feb/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRZA014 - South Africa - Fire

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Grand Total	376,327	322,412	53,915

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
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Budget Timeframe	2023-2024	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 12/Feb/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRZA014 - South Africa - Fire

Operating Timeframe: 27 Jul 2023 to 31 Jan 2024

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	232,359	234,929	-2,569
Construction - Housing	14,583		14,583
Clothing & Textiles	38,005	42,233	-4,228
Food	14,280	18,482	-4,202
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	73,637	51,442	22,195
Medical & First Aid	6,188	3,805	2,383
Teaching Materials	2,856		2,856
Utensils & Tools		69,708	-69,708
Other Supplies & Services	49,490	23,834	25,656
Cash Disbursement	33,320	25,423	7,897
Logistics, Transport & Storage	23,562	6,176	17,386
Distribution & Monitoring	2,380		2,380
Transport & Vehicles Costs	21,182	6,176	15,006
Personnel	50,837	11,951	38,886
International Staff		584	-584
National Society Staff		790	-790
Volunteers	50,837	10,576	40,261
Workshops & Training	16,898	11,068	5,830
Workshops & Training	16,898	11,068	5,830
General Expenditure	29,702	38,611	-8,908
Travel	3,094	9,511	-6,417
Information & Public Relations	5,236	8,492	-3,256
Office Costs	286	377	-92
Communications	19,516	248	19,268
Financial Charges	1,571	-833	2,403
Other General Expenses		20,816	-20,816
Indirect Costs	22,968	19,678	3,291
Programme & Services Support Recover	22,968	19,678	3,291
Grand Total	376,327	322,412	53,915