



EL SALVADOR

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 11.3M**

Appeal number **MAASV003**

In support of the Salvadorean Red Cross



58

National Society branches



298

National Society staff



1,719

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



21,000

Ongoing emergency operations



100

Climate and environment



45,000

Disasters and crises



87,625

Health and wellbeing



700

Migration and displacement



4,300

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Emergency response

- population movement

Longer term needs

- disaster risk management
- climate change adaptation
- violence prevention and protection
- epidemic preparedness and response

Capacity development

- humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy
- partnerships and resource mobilization
- quality and upgraded management systems

Key country data

Population **6.5M**

INFORM Severity rating **High**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **28**

Human Development Index rank **125**

Population below poverty level **26.2%**

Hazards



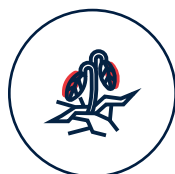
Population movement



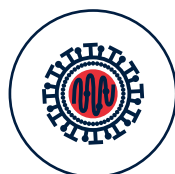
Hurricanes and cyclones



Floods



Drought



Disease outbreaks

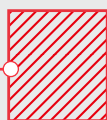


Poverty

Funding requirements

Total 11.3M CHF

Through the IFRC



→ **1.4M** CHF

Through Participating National Societies



6.2M CHF

Host National Society



→ **3.8M** CHF

IFRC Breakdown

583,000 CHF

Ongoing emergency operations

Longer term needs

45,000 CHF

Climate and environment

91,000 CHF

Disasters and crises

26,000 CHF

Health and wellbeing

208,000 CHF

Migration and displacement

55,000 CHF

Values, power and inclusion

357,000 CHF

Enabling local actors

Ongoing emergencies

MDR43008

Mexico and Central America
Migration Crisis
population movement

Participating National Societies

American Red Cross

British Red Cross*

Canadian Red Cross Society*

German Red Cross

Italian Red Cross

Japanese Red Cross Society*

Netherlands Red Cross*

Norwegian Red Cross

Spanish Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross*

Swiss Red Cross



NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The Salvadorean Red Cross was granted legal status in El Salvador by executive decree in 1885, and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross Red and Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1925. It works in an auxiliary role to the national authorities in humanitarian contexts. The National Society reaches nation-wide coverage through its network of 58 branches, and staff and volunteers. It has a Volunteer Ladies Committee, a Volunteer Lifeguard Corps and a Youth Red Cross with well-trained volunteers.

In the past year, the Salvadorean Red Cross has responded to various emergencies with an integral approach, providing humanitarian assistance to people on the move, communities affected by disasters caused by natural hazards, and supporting the different pillars of COVID-19 response operations.

The National Society's [Strategic Plan 2022–2026](#) is aligned to IFRC's 2030 Strategy. The Salvadorean Red Cross prioritizes three mission areas: crises and disasters, health and social inclusion. In the area of disasters and crises, it has developed an integrated risk and disaster management system that is community-based, with an emphasis on preparedness, response and recovery, to include livelihoods. Within the health programme, the

National Society has built the foundation for expanding and diversifying emergency medical services that meet quality and safety standards, and continues to provide significant, quality sustainable pre-hospital care. The priority area of social inclusion has grown steadily in importance, with increased resource allocation in recent years. This area works to increase assistance and protection for victims of violence and forced displacement in the areas of health, psychosocial support and livelihoods. Community engagement and accountability is a cross-cutting priority. In terms of institutional development, the Salvadorean Red Cross focusses strongly on modernization and sustainability of volunteer management.

To enhance its auxiliary role, in 2020, the National Society conducted a mapping of the legal decrees giving humanitarian access to the Red Cross in El Salvador, in order to review the inclusion of the National Society in the government's COVID-19 response measures. Since 2021, the auxiliary role of the National Society in laws and policies has been examined against the IFRC benchmark tool "Strengthening the auxiliary role through laws and policies," with the objective of identifying gaps and proposing recommendations.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America, yet the most densely populated. The country has faced many social problems, especially an historically high rate of violence. Violence rates have diminished due to more stringent security measures enforced by the national government, which has resulted in a significantly reduced number of violent deaths. The country is prone to climate-related hazards and disasters, as well as tectonic and volcanic events. Tectonic activity has caused the most changes to its topography and, amongst natural hazards and together with floods, has caused the greatest amount of loss of life and property.

COVID-19 accentuated existing socio-economic disparities, including for those in the informal labour sector, and brought higher levels of inequality, lack of social protection and poverty. Although El Salvador quickly adopted strong containment measures against the

outbreak, and the Government implemented a strong fiscal response to limit the impact of the pandemic on households and businesses, the pandemic dealt a heavy blow to growth and the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by eight per cent in 2020.

Latin America and the Caribbean region are characterized by weak health and social protection systems with expanding marginalized urban settlements that lack access to essential services. There are concerns about the sustained increase in food costs and basic needs for the most vulnerable. The annual inflation rate in El Salvador accelerated for the second consecutive month to 7.8 per cent in June 2022, compared with 7.5 per cent in May. According to [WFP](#), it was the highest reading since September 2008, mainly driven by increasing food prices caused by the Ukraine crisis.

A stagnant economy, high levels of crime and violence, and disasters caused by natural hazards have

pushed growing numbers of people to migrate without authorization or seek asylum abroad, mostly in the United States. Since the beginning of 2022, there has been a massive increase in the number of refugees, migrants and returnees in transit by land in a northerly direction through Central America. In addition to the complexity of transiting difficult routes, migrants are exposed to assault, physical and sexual violence and other protection risks, and cases of sexual violence have gone unprosecuted. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Missing Migrants Project, the approximately 4,000 deaths at the Mexico-US border are nearly five times as many as the combined death tolls recorded on all other routes. The leading cause of death is drowning (44%), followed by accidents, illness, lack of access to adequate health care, violence, and lack of shelter and food.

Conditions during migration also pose severe risks to the physical and mental health of migrants. Exposure to

hazards or risks including adverse weather, vector-borne diseases, and infectious diseases common to unsanitary water and living conditions are all common. There is a clear risk of psychological trauma from stress, anxiety and uncertainty for both migrant populations and host communities.

It is estimated that approximately one third of the Salvadorean population lives abroad. Migration has transformed family structures and has modified gender relations and family roles. Due to the migration of men, in some cases, women assume responsibility for the family, and in other cases, due to the migration of both parents, girls, boys and adolescents of both sexes are left under the responsibility of grandparents, uncles, aunts and other relatives. State institutions make efforts to reduce migration rates; however, these efforts must be complemented through the support of humanitarian assistance to achieve an efficient and effective response to this phenomena.

Ongoing emergency response

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

- Appeal number: [MDR43008](#) Mexico and Central America migration crisis
- Appeal launch date: 15 July 2022
- Appeal end date: 31 July 2023
- People affected: 500,000 people
- People to be assisted: 210,000 people

The increase in people on the move across Central America since early 2022 has been significant. In 2022, 6,471 Salvadorean migrant returnees from the United States and Mexico were reported, an increase of 254 per cent compared with the previous year. In addition, according to a report by the United States Customs and Border Protection Agency, over 8,000 Salvadorians were prevented from entering the country irregularly in March 2022, an increase from 7,146 in February 2021. There was a 209 per cent increase in deportations from the United States and Mexico in 2022, compared with the same period in 2021, according to official records.

Migrants, refugees and returnees mostly move through irregular channels. Along the routes, many of them face administrative barriers, suffer accidents and injuries, face extortion and sexual violence, and are separated from their families. Tragically, others die from disease

or harsh environmental conditions and weather. The majority come from Cuba, Venezuela and Haiti. The situation is especially serious for the most vulnerable groups such as children, young people and women; indigenous communities; people living with disabilities; the LGBTI+ community and the elderly population.

The main reasons for migrating include better economic opportunities, escaping violence, reuniting with family members, and recovering from the impact of recurring disasters and extreme weather events. The devastating socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing political crises are also factors, and will continue to increase population movements and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.

People on the move require significant assistance, in particular those with health problems. This high demand for assistance can be hampered by the exhaustion of personnel or the limited availability of food, water, facilities and first aid supplies. The impact of migration on children is of increasing concern as they face the threat of drowning, physical violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, exploitation and health risks, including mental health.

The Salvadorean Red Cross is able to identify the needs of people on the move due to its network of humanitarian service points and community engagement and accountability approach, combined with several years

of working on migration flows. These needs range from protection and health care to accessing specific information that allows them to make informed decisions along the route and at their destination. The most vulnerable migrants need access to medical care, mental health support, basic humanitarian assistance, connectivity and legal information.

Short description of emergency operational strategy

In July 2022, the IFRC launched a CHF18 million Emergency Appeal aiming to increase the reach of the National Societies of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, and to scale up assistance and protection for 210,000 people along migratory routes throughout Central America, through more effective preparedness and response, and strengthened capacities and risk reduction. Out of the 210,000 people expected to be reached, 175,000 were migrants in transit, 25,000 returnees and 10,000 people in host and origin communities.

The Emergency Appeal focuses on:

- Integrated assistance: shelter, livelihoods and multi-purpose cash
- Health and care: including water, sanitation and hygiene, mental health and psychosocial support, primary and pre-hospital health care, and community health
- Protection and prevention: protection, gender and inclusion; community engagement and accountability; migration; environmental sustainability; risk reduction; and climate adaptation and recovery

Humanitarian service points are the cornerstone of this operation, to provide comprehensive and integrated assistance and protection services to migrants based on need. Humanitarian service points sit along migratory routes to provide a neutral, welcoming and safe

environment for migrants to access essential services that might otherwise be inaccessible. Services include psychological first aid, drinking water and hygiene supplies, primary health care, first aid, food and non-food distribution, support to restore family links, accurate information on service points along the route and, in some cases, legal advice. Thus far, with the support of donors, the National Societies of Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama are operating 20 humanitarian service points. With this Emergency Appeal, regional response capacity is increasing, with 30 more humanitarian service points in different locations, to achieve a total of 50.

The Salvadorean Red Cross recognizes and values all members of communities that access humanitarian service points by incorporating community engagement and accountability, and protection, gender and inclusion approaches into operations. This creates opportunities to adapt services to accommodate diverse and evolving migration needs, and support efforts to improve the quality of services based on feedback from service users.

The Mexico and Central American Migration Crisis Emergency Appeal was launched to urgently address the growing humanitarian needs of migrants, refugee returnees and host communities in the region. This Emergency Appeal complements the Americas pillar of the IFRC Global Route-Based Migration Programme, a multi-year programme that addresses the ongoing assistance and protection needs of people on the move, irrespective of their status.

Once the Emergency Appeal is completed, the operation and response activities of the National Societies of Central America and Mexico will continue in accordance with their three-year programmes and strategic plans. These plans include responding to the migration situation through a medium- and long-term approach, and facing a prolonged crisis.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

The fifth evaluation report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (AR5) identifies the Central American region as the tropical region most sensitive to climate change. For its vulnerability to climatic, geological and volcanic events, as well as high degree of human settlement and ecosystem fragility due to socio-economic conditions, El Salvador is considered

one of the most at-risk countries in the region to the impacts of climate change.

According to the [National plan for adaptation to climate change-2019](#), El Salvador suffers the impacts of climatic events due to both extreme rains and droughts, with losses and damages that compromise the economic and social development of the country. In this century, these extreme events have increased, resulting in

enormous economic and human losses. These include Hurricane Stan (2005); the low pressure associated with Hurricane Ida (2009); Tropical Storm Agatha (2010); Tropical Depression 12E (2011); and droughts from 2012 to 2016 and in 2018, all with devastating effects on water resources, ecosystems, populations and the basic infrastructure of the country.

In 2009, the organization Germanwatch placed El Salvador in first place in the Global Climate Risk Index due to the impacts of low pressure E96 associated with Hurricane Ida in November of the same year. Subsequent events such as tropical storm Agatha in 2010 and Tropical Depression 12E in 2011, confirmed that climate variability is a growing threat for El Salvador, with the highest accumulated rainfall in 46 years of historical record between 2010 and 2011. Three continuous years of extreme and enduring rains, with severe impacts from flooding, were followed by five years of drought, resulting in intense socioeconomic implications, especially for the most vulnerable communities. Changes in rainfalls, droughts and floods have high cost in lost productivity in El Salvador.

Regarding future projections of the impacts of climate change in El Salvador, within the First National Communication on Climate Change (MARN, 2000), the average annual temperature could increase by three degrees Celsius by 2100. Mean annual rainfall projections were more uncertain.

Main actions and areas of support

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

The National Society leads locally owned actions to support communities and authorities in their efforts to adapt to climate change and build resilience to extreme weather events. Adaptation requires a collective effort to improve knowledge of climate trends and their

impacts, preparation techniques, and adaptation strategies to fight the risk to food production and livelihoods. The Salvadorean Red Cross is an active member of the regional IFRC-led network of climate and environmental practitioners, which aims at promoting peer-to-peer knowledge and best practice exchanges, as well as empowering local stakeholders to address urgent climate and environmental crises.

The IFRC network will support the National Society to:

- Develop environmental policies and climate change adaptation strategies, based on evidence, and through mapping and risk scenarios
- Conduct climate-related capacity building to enable better planning and forecast-based financing
- Define operational guidelines and internal procedures to reduce the environmental impact of IFRC operations, and improve dissemination to staff and volunteers, with emphasis on Red Cross Youth
- Develop information and dissemination actions on climate change and its impacts, oriented within the organizations involving staff and volunteers, with emphasis on Red Cross youth
- Develop communication, education and information strategies on climate change and its impacts, targeting community behavioural transformation and aimed at informing local policy-making
- Promote community-led climate-smart solutions and plans that address challenges, improve behaviours and promote mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change
- Access technical support for climate-smart livelihoods, especially those based on food production and agriculture

Disasters and crises

People in El Salvador are highly exposed to multiple hazards that combine to produce high levels of vulnerability. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), almost 90 per cent of the territory in El Salvador is susceptible to severe impacts of natural disasters and threats such as drought, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. The country is prone to experience the results of regular tropical storms coming from the Caribbean during the hurricane season, resulting in floods and massive damage to the country's infrastructure. The country is also subject to frequent minor earth tremors and occasional earthquakes, and has several active volcanoes.

In El Salvador, crises and disasters have severe consequences on the food production of sustenance farmers, resulting in increases in malnutrition among children under five. Man-made hazards include widespread violence perpetrated by non-state armed groups, social unrest, and political and economic crises.

Capacities for improving emergency preparedness, response, recovery and community resilience are not sufficiently developed at community, local and national levels. Most of the institutional and community planning does not take into account present and future potential climate and environmental risks. Regional coordination mechanisms have also not reached an adequate level of operational capacity to address current and future high levels of vulnerability. Based on the accumulated reports of the IFRC network in El Salvador, the communities' main concerns are the lack of multi-hazard risk reduction measures, absence of risk information, and insufficient anticipatory action and rapid response protocols.

Actors of the National Civil Protection System, including the Salvadorean Red Cross are undergoing improvement processes in the areas of risk-informed and people-centred contingency and early action planning, effective support to communities in taking anticipatory action and rapid response, cash transfer preparedness, environmental sustainability of operations, and post-crisis displacement and violence preparedness.

Main actions and areas of support

Since 2016, Disaster Risk Management has been a strategic priority for the Salvadorean Red Cross, with actions focused on increasing preparedness and response capacities of the National Society as part of the National Civil Protection System, increasing capacities of vulnerable communities to cope with emergencies and disasters, and increasing preparedness, response and recovery capacities of schools in vulnerable areas.

The Salvadorean Red Cross is engaged in the IFRC Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process, has an Emergency Operations Centre, equipment for responding to emergencies, and invests in capacity building and establishing protocols and procedures. The National Society continues to strengthen its cash preparedness and has implemented cash and voucher assistance programmes using bank services in emergency operations, including during the COVID-19 response. The National Society monitors its preparedness and response mechanisms through a dashboard, which facilitates tracking of progress in priority areas of information management, geographic information systems, early warning systems, multi-purpose cash

support, contingency and disaster plans, standard operating procedures, health in emergencies, and epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response.

The IFRC network will support the Salvadorean Red Cross to:

- Share knowledge and develop assessment and needs analysis tools, including digitalization efforts, to produce evidence-based preparedness and response planning
- Use preparedness for effective response to better prepare for the increasing frequency of disasters and crises
- Access technical support in cash and voucher assistance preparedness, and promote the integration of organizational tools, systems, procedures and learning opportunities
- Provide training and learning opportunities to set up community engagement and accountability strategies mainstreamed in all actions
- Improve anticipatory and early action planning and implementation, so it can react in a timely manner to the possible impact of catastrophic events
- Strengthen local preparedness and response capacities, and promote proper coordination with local civil protection structures and with national systems
- Integrate an early recovery and community resilience approach from the start of emergency response actions, which will in turn promote linkage with longer-term actions
- Develop content and media coverage that will catalyse social conversations about the IFRC's role in responding to, and enabling recovery from, hurricanes in Central America
- Collaborate with state agencies in order to coordinate their responses to disasters and crises
- Implement strategies to advocate for international disaster response laws

Under the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership \(PPP\)](#) between the IFRC and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), with implementation support from EU National Societies and the IFRC, the National Society will consolidate its lines of action, increasing the coverage and capacity to link community levels with the National Civil Protection System. In the inception phase, in coordination with and validated by Civil



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Protection, 20 communities in the departments of La Paz, San Vicente, San Miguel and Usulután have been supported in analysing capacities and vulnerabilities in order to prepare community risk maps. For the next phase, 10 communities have been identified: Rio Viejo, El Llano, Tierra Prometida, El Pacún, San Carlos, La Cocosica, El Carao, La Bomba, Moropal and Vado Marín. Work will be done with communities for effective communication and implementation of risk-informed and multi-risk contingency plans and response mechanisms, development and testing of Early Warning Systems/ Early Action triggers and standard protocols. This will be through a bottom-up strategy, linking community, local and national level. Efforts will be made to make the National Society's programmes climate-smart and identify opportunities to support climate-smart livelihoods strategies at community and household levels. Chosen communities belong to departments prioritized by the National Civil Protection Directorate, where the National Society has already implemented community feedback mechanisms. The Salvadorean Red Cross will also update its Preparedness for Effective Response action plan, and strengthen its capacities through digital transformation.

In the inception phase, new partnerships with cash transfer companies such as remittance companies and banking entities have been explored, and new cash and voucher assistance (CVA) approaches have been researched. Standard operating procedures were updated, and in the rollout phase processes will be adapted, including updating the existing pre-agreements with cash and voucher assistance financial service providers. Cash transfers have been used to assist in the management of protection cases for migrants, displaced persons, host communities in

vulnerable situations, and people affected by emergencies and disasters. Participation and coordination in the cash transfer working group has been ongoing in the inception phase and will be continued in the roll-out phase.

Health and wellbeing

The COVID-19 pandemic in El Salvador has had a strong and significantly negative impact on the population, affecting family income and impacting people's rights. Some impacts from the containment measures include the militarization of communities, difficulty in accessing basic services, loss of employment and suspension of the school year. This has resulted in a deterioration of mental and emotional health, especially in children, adolescents, and women. These factors are exacerbated by an increase in gender-based violence due to living with aggressors in the family, the burden of care tasks and the scant institutional response.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has put in evidence the country's structural vulnerabilities in epidemiological surveillance, with major gaps in community early action and follow-up. The country has been impacted in recent years by epidemics such as the Zika virus, dengue, and other waterborne diseases, reflecting the vulnerability of early warning and response systems.

According to the El Salvador National Strategy, between 2021 and 2025, epidemiological surveillance systems will be improved at the national level in order to identify human diseases attributable to climate change and its associated variability, integrate a pilot system with common variables allowing predictive and multi-variate analysis linked to the National Epidemiological

Surveillance entities and sustain a situation room to analyse and make decisions based on information shared and updated between sectors. To implement this measure and work towards an integrated health system, coordination between institutions and governing bodies must be strengthened and improved.

Main actions and areas of support

From 2016 to date, the Salvadorean Red Cross has worked to increase preparedness and response capacities in the health and water, sanitation and hygiene sectors, increase community capacities for early warning and community-based response to epidemics, complementing Ministry of Public Health interventions, and improve hospital and extra-hospital health services, with the objective of effective early detection and early response to disease outbreaks and health risks. The Salvadorean Red Cross health response includes:

- Community health outreach campaigns to provide health care and health education
- Health promotion campaigns (including communication campaigns, community actions and others)
- Pre-hospital care (considering infection prevention and control)
- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH)

For COVID-19, the IFRC supported the development and implementation of the Salvadorean Red Cross response plan and pre-hospital care protocols, and the strengthening of the National Society's ambulance services. The Salvadorean Red Cross and the IFRC also implemented a three-year Zika project (2016–2019) centred on epidemic preparedness and response, which included community-based surveillance, vector control and community engagement and accountability.

The main focus of the IFRC network is aimed at improving, promoting and increasing access to health services and disease prevention at community level, with comprehensive community health programmes directed towards the most vulnerable and remote populations. Efforts have been channelled into increasing capacity for health services, and the improvement of coordination with public health systems.

The IFRC network will support the Salvadorean Red Cross to:

- Develop its capacities, in terms of knowledge and health information management for evidence-based strategies, staff and volunteer training, and organizational development
- Develop its position on relevant health policy-making spaces, and its role as an auxiliary to the Ministry of Health
- Improve the social, institutional and financial viability and sustainability of its health programmes and departments, including blood donor recruitment plans, and improve dissemination of service information
- Strengthen community-based health programmes to improve access to affordable, quality, needs-appropriate and comprehensive health services, including improved referral pathways
- Strengthen community-based health programmes to promote disease prevention and care, through information, education and risk communication strategies and through the provision of care services including water, sanitation and hygiene, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, food and nutrition, mental health and psychosocial support services, and protection, gender and inclusion
- Develop emergency health preparedness, response and recovery actions to ensure timely access to health care services during emergencies
- Increase its capacities to prepare and respond to epidemics, including the setting up of community-based epidemiological surveillance systems, in coordination with health systems, and the development of standard operating procedures
- Support the development and standardization of its mental health and psychosocial support services

Under the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#) and during the inception phase, the Salvadorean Red Cross has improved WASH services at the community level in four community health centres: San Luis La Herradura, El Tránsito, Concepción Batres and Toluca. In the roll-out phase, the National Society will carry out health promotion activities for early detection and early action

through community-based education campaigns. The National Society will continue to promote community health processes, and strengthen the participation of local health partners with communities as the basis to prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks. Community health committees will be created and recognized by health authorities. Ten communities will participate, with activities implemented and supervised by the Ministry of Health, accompanied by the Salvadorean Red Cross. A community-based surveillance system will be developed according to existing national standards, guidelines and policies. The design of the surveillance strategy will be developed and implemented as a pilot in one health facility and the five communities it serves. The National Society will also support authorities to adopt and strengthen relevant national plans, strategies and policies related to epidemic, pandemic and disaster preparedness and response. Capacities of the Salvadorean Red Cross will be strengthened as health emergency responders, including response to epidemics.

Migration and displacement

It is estimated that more than half of Salvadorean households have a relative abroad. Among the inhabitants of El Salvador, intentions to migrate are high; about four out of 10 people have seriously considered migrating to another country, one of the highest proportions in Latin America. Remittances sent by Salvadoreans abroad reach one in five households in the country. According to IOM in 2017, on average, the remittances received by each household reached about US\$ 3,000 per year, and which are used mainly to cover consumption needs. At an aggregate level, this flow of money from abroad represents more than 20 per cent of the gross domestic product.

Since the beginning of 2022, there has been a massive increase in the number of refugees, migrants and returnees in transit by land, northwards through Central America, compared with previous years. In El Salvador, there has been a 209 per cent increase in deportations from the United States and Mexico in the first semester of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021 (see also ongoing emergency response section).

Internal displacement is also of concern in El Salvador. Sudden displacement can cause the loss of family assets, leaving families without the resources to meet even the most basic and critical needs, such as housing, food, school fees, or medical care. Displacement also disrupts social protection networks, causing stigmatization and revictimization, and exposing the displaced population to specific protection risks such

as trafficking, gender-based violence, other situations of violence, social exclusion and lack of access to basic services. Exposure to such risks and feelings of vulnerability can cause profound psychological effects that may prevent displaced persons from seeking assistance and protection. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), during 2020, in El Salvador, there were 114,000 people forced to flee their homes due to violence, while the Salvadorean Government reported 71,500 internally displaced persons in 2018.

The El Salvador Supreme Court of Justice officially recognized forced internal displacement in 2018, and the Government drew up a National Response Plan with 43 commitments by 2022 in protection, health, education and livelihoods to help internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers.

Main actions and areas of support

The Salvadorean Red Cross is actively engaged in responding to the needs of vulnerable migrants, including through the IFRC Emergency Appeal for Mexico and Central America migration crisis (see ongoing emergency response section). Over the last five years, the National Society has focused on increasing its capacities for caring for and protecting vulnerable migrant and displaced populations, responding to mixed flows and mass population movements. The National Society provides case management for people internally displaced by other situations of violence, and works within the framework of its auxiliary role by strengthening public institutions linked to migration and displacement.

The IFRC supports the Salvadorean Red Cross in line with the IFRC Americas Regional Migration Plan of Action (2021–2024), enhancing National Society capacities to understand population movement dynamics, as well as to deliver appropriate and differentiated humanitarian services. The IFRC also supports the development of the National Society's migration strategy, along with other Movement actors.

The Salvadorean Red Cross is also part of the IFRC three-year [Global Route-Based Migration Programme](#), which aims to improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people annually across the world who are either on the move or living in host communities. It will do so through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points; (2) strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

The IFRC network will support the Salvadorean Red Cross to:

- Roll out its migration strategy, fostering regional coordination to address the cross-border migration phenomena in Central America
- Build its capacities by developing tools and training, and providing technical support, including the development and proper maintenance of national and regional information management systems for migratory flows
- Establish and expand the range of services available at humanitarian service points in key locations along migratory routes, to support migrants' access to comprehensive needs-appropriate assistance
- Ensure that assistance and protection services are provided and promoted through engagement with local and national authorities, host communities and affected people, as well as with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), other organizations and donors
- Use of discrimination-free culturally appropriate information that builds on the National Society's assistance and protection services, promotes voluntary access to comprehensive services, and ensures migrants receive proper information on their legal rights
- Access global, regional and local analysis on current and emerging trends, anticipating population movement when possible, in order to support the National Society's information-based programming
- Conduct humanitarian diplomacy with national and international actors regarding migration and host community interventions, based on evidence

Under the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#), hygiene kits were delivered to displaced persons, and capacity building around mental health and psychosocial support was provided for branch staff in Apopa, Guazapa, Aguilares, Quezaltepeque and Nejapa. Three humanitarian service points were established in San Salvador, Santa Ana and San Miguel in order to provide attention and protection to migrants that is safe, accountable and participatory. There are plans to increase information management and coordination capacities via the Salvadorean Red Cross Victim Attention Units in these locations, and through referrals to the National Attention and Protection System. Assistance includes protection case management of target population (migrants, displaced persons, and host communities in vulnerable situations) and the

pre-positioning of supplies for immediate attention, to ensure access to basic hygiene, and reduce the spread of diseases.

Values, power and inclusion

Central America continues to be considered highly violent. Although crimes affecting life and property have seen a decline, organized crime and gangs, including human trafficking organizations and other non-state armed groups, are still a major concern for many people. Opportunities to break out of these violent environments are few, because of high levels of structural inequality. These circumstances hinder equitable access to basic services and livelihoods that would allow for a standard of living above that of survival.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of protection for communities in El Salvador exposed to other situations of violence has grown. Armed groups have used confinement to strengthen their control over communities, intensifying extortion, drug trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, and using forced disappearances, assassinations, and death threats against those who do not comply. During 2020, the number of homicides declined significantly due to the containment and mitigation measures undertaken by the Government of El Salvador, resulting in the average daily homicide rate dropping from 6.6 in 2019 to 3.7 in 2020 (National Civil Police Working Group). In spite of this, the Salvadorean Red Cross continues to respond to situations related to violence at the same rate as in 2019.

These compounded risk and vulnerability factors have a disproportionate impact on women, children, the LGBTI+ community and people living with disabilities, and are not addressed by the state. Vulnerable groups suffer not only differential impacts of compounded crises, but they face additional barriers to access adequate assistance and protection mechanisms. Gender inequalities are aggravated in rural communities, partly due to the traditions of indigenous populations, where inequalities are established at the moment of birth. This translates into limited access to basic services, resources, economic opportunities and livelihoods, as well as high vulnerability to violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence. There continues to be a gender gap in organizational and political participation.

In El Salvador, about 60 per cent of the population works in the informal sector, most of them women, many mothers, and many adolescent mothers who are heads of households. The measures adopted to combat COVID-19 made household survival difficult and hit the

informal sector particularly hard, threatening the economic autonomy of many women.

Women's organizations call for more data reporting on the protection of women's human rights and emphasize the difficulties women have had accessing institutions and complaint mechanisms. Women's organizations involved in reporting and support have registered an increase in calls received and in legal and psychological interventions for women, youth and the LGBTIQ+ population.

In 2020, the Legislative Assembly approved the "Special Law for the Comprehensive Care and Protection of Persons in Situations of Forced Internal Displacement", a fundamental instrument to provide care, protection and durable solutions to internally displaced persons or persons at risk of displacement due to violence.

Main actions and areas of support

The Salvadorean Red Cross maintains an inclusive approach in all actions in accordance with the IFRC's [protection, gender and inclusion policy](#). The IFRC will support the National Society to ensure that programmes and operations promote dignity, access, participation and safety under the agreed minimum standards for protection, gender and inclusion in emergency operations, programmes and training.

The Salvadorean Red Cross, with IFRC support, is developing a roadmap for the implementation of the [community engagement and accountability minimum commitments](#). The National Society is currently being supported to deepen the implementation of community engagement and accountability in the country's immunization processes. In addition, community engagement and accountability is integrated into migration interventions by providing lifesaving information and developing feedback mechanisms with migrants in transit and host populations. In 2019, over 70 staff and volunteers were trained in community engagement and accountability, and the territorial network of community engagement and accountability focal points in the country was consolidated.

The IFRC network will support the Salvadorean Red Cross to:

- Develop information, education and communication strategies to raise awareness on rights, protection, gender and inclusion values
- Fight against social barriers to equal access to information, assistance and protection services
- Increase institutional capacities for social inclusion and gender, supporting the development of protection, gender and inclusion policies and operational protocols, monitoring and reporting tools, and training for staff and volunteers
- Improve decision-making processes aimed at promoting inclusion, diversity and equal participation both within the National Society, among their volunteers, and in the communities in which they serve
- Develop operational and referral protocols addressing the specific inclusion, protection and assistance needs of women, children, the LGBTI+ community and people living with disabilities
- Develop community engagement and accountability policies and plans that use performance indicators to monitor community satisfaction within protection, gender and inclusion activities and programmes

Under the [Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#), a community engagement and accountability approach will be institutionalized at all levels in the National Society. After capacity building activities, a Community Engagement and Accountability Implementation Plan will be rolled out, facilitating participation of people affected in programme evaluation and decision making, and bettering coordination with Civil Protection System authorities. Community engagement and accountability approaches will be systematic, coherent and coordinated, furthering the incorporation of standards for migrant and displaced populations into the Humanitarian Country Team and Health Protection Cluster's frameworks.

Enabling local actors

The Salvadorean Red Cross is committed to pursuing its institutional strengthening, and is actively using IFRC assessment tools and approaches to guide its development. It has carried out the self-assessment part of the IFRC's Organizational Capacity Assessment

and Certification ([OCAC](#)) process in 2013 and 2018. The self-assessment part of the OCAC process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The Salvadorean Red Cross is also

implementing the Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) and is at 50 per cent implementation, while it is at the action and accountability phase in the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process. The PER Approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyse the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and ultimately take necessary action to improve it. Lastly, the Salvadorean Red Cross has also been positively evaluated through the IFRC Working with Project Partners (WWPP), which reviews financial management systems.

The IFRC network is committed to support the National Society in its development, according to its priorities.

Engaged

- Prepare, maintain and update advocacy strategies that promote the humanitarian diplomacy capacities of the National Society, and enable them to maximize their privileged position as an auxiliary to the authorities
- Support the generation and consolidation of alliances, partnerships and inter-institutional coordination outside the IFRC network, with government institutions, humanitarian-relevant actors and civil society organizations, academia, social influencers, media and alternative distribution platforms
- Promote the innovation of structures, processes and competencies to develop and implement a communications incubator and accelerator for the National Society to create, test and run innovative formats and strategies that increase their impact and build public trust and understanding of their roles
- Provide technical support in the development of business continuity plans to respond efficiently when services and functions are affected by crises and disasters
- Strengthen institutional capacities on information management, with a focus on improving anticipation to high-impact events, not only climate and non-weather-related, but also including large population movements
- Support the National Society to increase technological capabilities and digitalization for services at headquarters and branch offices including data collection, information management and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Accountable

- Develop a resource mobilization strategy for Central America based on peer-to-peer learning and good practices exchange, that builds on improved capacities through technical assistance and training on financial sustainability, proposal development, outreach and donor relations
- Support the National Society in the identification and generation of new funding sources through innovative sustainability initiatives
- Support the implementation of quality management systems, incorporating a service user approach

Trusted

- Provide technical support for the development of monitoring systems for programmes and projects, including information management in emergency operations through the development of information tools, training and technical support
- Review and update the accounting and administrative systems, to be extended within the branch network to improve financial controls and reporting to authorities
- Develop and implement a strategy on proactive and reactive communication to mitigate the risk of fraud and corruption
- Standardize and apply accountability mechanisms internally and externally through the community engagement and accountability methodology
- Strengthen volunteer programmes by promoting peer learning, setting up motivational and benefit plans for volunteers, and implementing institutional training curricula to ensure meaningful, timely and relevant participation of volunteers
- Promote volunteer recruitment programmes, mainstreaming a gender and inclusion approach to ensure the incorporation of diverse profiles, paying special attention to the management of youth volunteers
- Develop and implement the operational internal security strategy, reviewing communication mechanisms and flows related to security incidents, and the capacity of the security liaison network in terms of recruitment, awareness raising, equipment and training
- Ensure all of the IFRC network present adheres to the framework for joint planning and priority setting, using the common action strategy as the basis for unified country planning

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The **IFRC** is represented by its Country Cluster Delegation for Central America in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and operates with an extended team of specialists in different areas in all Central American countries. This enables close coordination and constant communication with the National Societies of Central America and the participating National Societies that support them. The IFRC support centres on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development, and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme. The IFRC's annual programme includes supporting the Salvadorean Red Cross with National Society Development, strengthening disaster response management and preparedness, health, WASH, migration and displacement, cash transfers, and community engagement and accountability.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the National Society through a number of Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeals operations in relation to tropical storms and storm surges, floods, droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, disease outbreaks and population movement. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic response, the IFRC, through its global Emergency Appeal, has supported the National Society in its COVID-19 response.

IFRC membership coordination

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

El Salvador hosts the Reference Centre for Disaster Preparedness (CREPD), with its country focal points providing direct support to all the National Societies in Central America. The Reference Centre helps

strengthen capacities of National Societies through developing methodologies, tools, learning techniques, harmonization processes, and research. The expertise, innovation and best practices of the National Societies themselves and other partners are studied, under the coordination of the IFRC Americas Regional Office. The Reference Centre's strategic directions are knowledge management, research and innovation, strategic leadership and management support, programmes, education and quality management.

The National Society leads its partnerships with sister National Societies in the region. The combined experience, technical capacities and field knowledge within the IFRC network constitute a solid basis for achieving the expected outcomes in the country, in terms of disasters and crises (both man-made and caused by natural hazards), primary health care, the prevention and response to epidemics (COVID-19 and others), longer-term resilience building programmes including livelihoods and protection, and responding to unmet humanitarian and protection needs of migrants and displaced people.

The National Society in El Salvador is part of the global Pilot Programmatic Partnership between DG ECHO and the IFRC, with implementation support from the **Spanish Red Cross** as lead EU National Society, and from the **Italian Red Cross** and **Norwegian Red Cross**. The partnership implements activities in the areas of disaster risk management, epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response, humanitarian assistance and protection for people on the move, cash and voucher assistance and risk communication, and community engagement and accountability.

The partnership meets the realities of extended crises with longer-term predictable funding, facilitating actions and processes with the potential for greater, longer-term impact. It leverages the IFRC's global network and unique access to people and communities, and it helps to fulfil the ambitions of the European Union as the world's biggest international donor for humanitarian assistance.

The following participating National Societies have provided support to the Salvadorean Red Cross:

Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Engaged	Accountable	Trusted
American Red Cross	CHF 0.34M								
German Red Cross	CHF 0.44M								
Italian Red Cross	CHF 0.05M								
Other Funding Requirements Sources	5.36M	Total 6.19M							

The **American Red Cross** has had interventions in the country for 13 years with disaster risk reduction, organizational development and response programmes with the Salvadorean Red Cross, considering El Salvador as a priority country.

The **German Red Cross** signed a framework of understanding in 2022 to initiate cooperation processes with the Salvadorean Red Cross in order to contribute to the fulfilment of their strategic objectives in areas of mutual interest. The German Red Cross develops actions under the framework of integration and coherence in interventions with the rest of the Central American National Societies.

The **Italian Red Cross** has been developing interventions for some years through partnerships with other participating National Societies. It provides support and technical advice in risk and disaster management, climate change adaptation and organizational development, and is considering other areas of cooperation.

The **Norwegian Red Cross**, with a delegation in the country since 2017, began operations in El Salvador as a participating partner in 2011, supporting the Global HIV Alliance in the Americas programme, under the responsibility of IFRC, and implemented by various National Societies. Between 2011 and 2013, it supported the Salvadorean Red Cross in community WASH programmes, funded by NORAD. WASH continues to be a priority for the Norwegian Red Cross. Other projects include strengthening access to education and health in urban areas, protection of health services and strengthening educational centres to respond to emergencies and disasters. The ECHO-funded Children for Peace Project to increase access and permanence in schools

for children affected by violence ran from 2016 to 2018, and the Swiss Development Cooperation-funded project to promote access to protective learning environments for children displaced by situations of violence in the Northern Triangle of Central America ran from 2018 to 2020.

From 2012 to 2015, the Salvadorean Red Cross received support in financial management, a topic that continues to be a priority for the Norwegian Red Cross. The National Society was also supported by the Norwegian Red Cross in resource mobilization in 2016 and strengthening the planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting department from 2016 to 2019.

The **Spanish Red Cross** has been present in El Salvador since 1998, in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch. It focusses on technical support to the National Society in strengthening disaster risk management capacity, assistance and protection to people on the move, violence prevention and livelihoods. Interventions it supports include mental health and psychosocial support, cash and voucher assistance and differentiated services for people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations. The added value of the Spanish Red Cross is its long-term commitment to supporting the Salvadorean Red Cross in these areas, as well as providing technical assistance in financial and regulatory compliance.

Globally, the Spanish Red Cross hosts the IFRC Livelihoods Resource Centre with the mission of assisting IFRC members by increasing awareness and effective programming strategies through training and competency development, in order to build individual and community capacities to restore and strengthen economically-secure living conditions.

The **Swiss Red Cross** began working in El Salvador after the 1986 earthquake. To date, it has maintained an uninterrupted presence, providing support to the Salvadorean Red Cross to respond to various disasters such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998, the earthquakes in 2001, and tropical storms Stan in 2005, Agata in 2008, and Ida in 2009. During these years, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction and rehabilitation projects were developed with a community focus, including community health, disaster risk management, and institutional strengthening of the National Society. In 2010, El Salvador became a priority country programme, giving greater emphasis to projects with a long-term development approach, and with a focus in the central and eastern areas of the country. In 2010, in the Bajo Lempa region in the department of Usulután, the Swiss Red

Cross started supporting the Salvadorean Red Cross to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations, focusing on community health, disaster prevention and adaptation to climate change.

The Swiss Red Cross contributes to the institutional strengthening of the Salvadorean Red Cross through its projects. All projects are directly executed by the Salvadorean Red Cross, with the Swiss Red Cross providing technical and financial support, incorporated into the National Society cost recovery policy. The 2021–2024 country programme focuses on disaster risk management, social inclusion with emphasis on community health and the returnee population, and strengthening National Society capacities.

Movement coordination

The IFRC leads regular coordination meetings between the different International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement actors, including participating National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), through established national and regional mechanisms. It also coordinates humanitarian assistance during emergency responses. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination

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

The ICRC contributes to the National Society's work in protection, including minimum standards, restoring family links, self-care messages for migrants, health and first aid, and support in humanitarian diplomacy. The ICRC also specifically supports the Salvadorean Red Cross on shelter, livelihoods and multi-purpose cash.

Coordination with other actors

The Salvadorean Red Cross, in its auxiliary role, is jointly defining humanitarian objectives together with public institutions such as the National Civil Protection System, including active participation in platforms such as CEPREDENAC, the National Health System/Ministry of Public Health and the National Attention and Protection System. The Salvadorean Red Cross coordinates with the platform 'Management for the Attention to Migrants' to provide timely humanitarian assistance to returned migrants, as well as coordinating with international bodies. Activities with public authorities include:

- increasing the disaster risk management capacities of the National Civil Protection System
- reinforcing epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response capacities of the Ministry of Public Health by supporting hospital and pre-hospital health assistance services for COVID-19 and non-COVID related conditions, contributing to vaccination and information campaigns (including COVID-19), reinforcing public health and social measures for COVID-19 transmission control, and strengthening community early warning and early response structures
- working together with the National Attention and Protection System, led by the National Directorate of Attention to Victims, to assist and protect victims of situations of violence, including people on the move

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Society worked alongside governmental institutions, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The IFRC assisted in making recommendations to ensure an appropriate response and coordinate activities. To ensure adequate communication and collaboration with all key stakeholders involved in the response to COVID-19, the National Society held regular technical coordination meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Health, PAHO, WHO and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) at the national level, with support of the IFRC.

Regular coordination with other humanitarian actors is ensured through participation in El Salvador's Humanitarian Country Team, alongside the IFRC and participating National Societies, as relevant. The National Society participates in the cash voucher assistance and community engagement and accountability working groups, and works closely with a large number of agencies of the United Nations System: shelter cluster with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), health cluster with PAHO, protection and health clusters with the United National Children's

Fund (UNICEF) and protection cluster with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In recent years, the National Society has positioned itself as a key stakeholder in the protection sector thanks to the support of the IFRC and the Spanish Red Cross, assuming leadership roles in cluster coordination and reaching partnership agreements with UNICEF and UNHCR. The IFRC network maintains fluid coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNICEF through the Humanitarian Country Team coordination, specifically related to livelihoods, food security, WASH and child protection.

The Salvadorean Red Cross also participates in civil society coordination spaces with Doctors of the World, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children, Plan International, Oxfam and a large number of Salvadorean civil society organizations linked to health and protection issues.

The IFRC participates in national and regional coordination spaces with external partners, to stay informed about the humanitarian context and contribute to the IFRC network's perspective and work.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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



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

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