

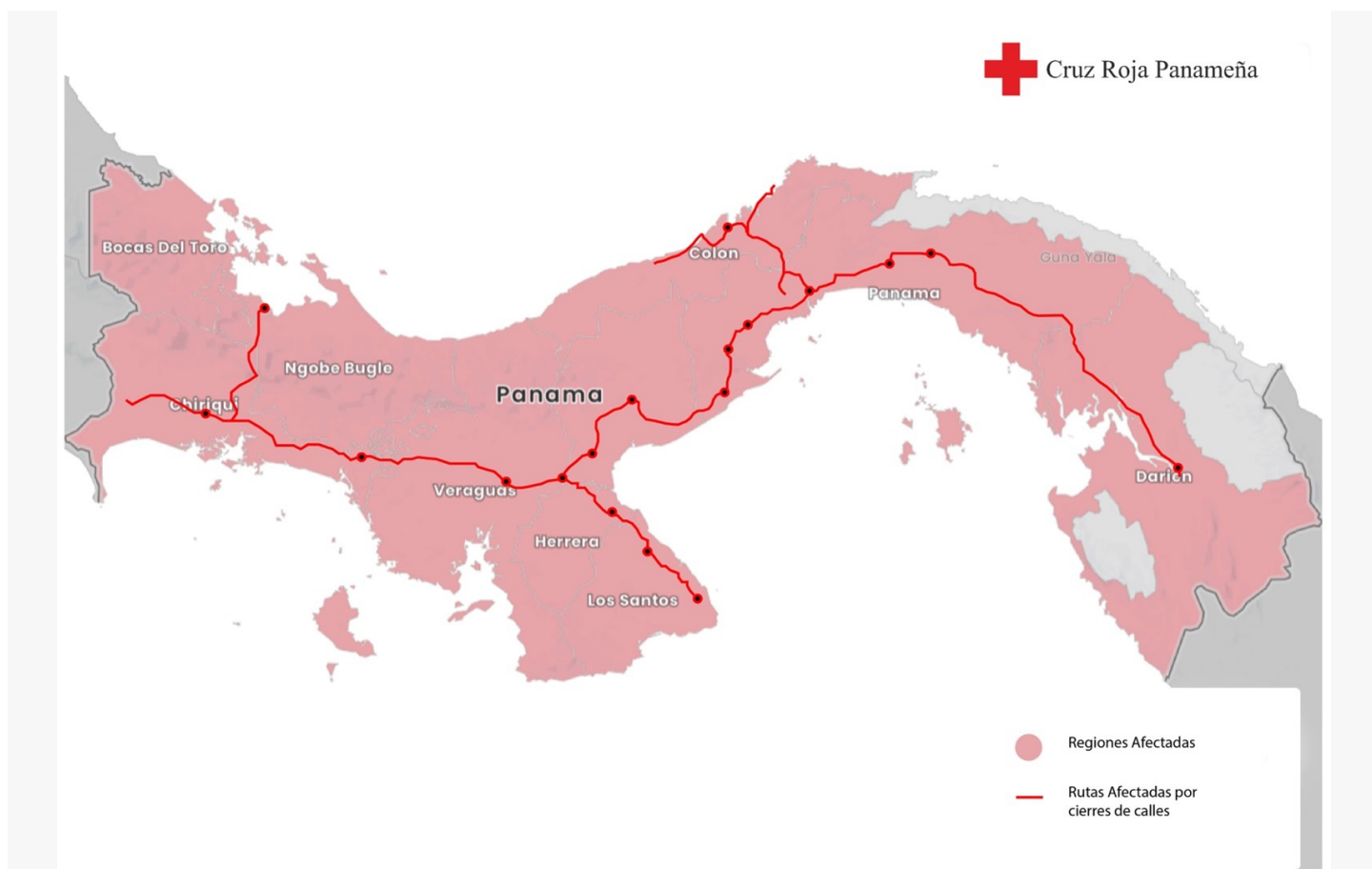


Red Cross Society of Panama volunteers providing prehospital care in different points of the country where large-scale demonstrations are carried out. 2 November, 2023. Source: PRC

Appeal: <b>MDRPA018</b>	Country: <b>Panama</b>	Hazard: <b>Civil Unrest</b>	Type of DREF: <b>Response</b>
Crisis Category: <b>Yellow</b>	Event Onset: <b>Sudden</b>	DREF Allocation: <b>CHF 172,535</b>	
Glide Number: -	People Affected: <b>2,000,000 people</b>	People Targeted: <b>3,500 people</b>	
Operation Start Date: -	Operation Timeframe: <b>3 months</b>	Operation End Date: -	DREF Published: -

Targeted Areas: **Bocas Del Toro, Chiriqui, Colon, Darien, Los Santos, Panama, Veraguas, Cocle, Herrera, Ngobe Bugle**

# Description of the Event



Map 1. Regions affected and routes affected by road closures. Source: PRC

## What happened, where and when?

On October 27, 2023, the Panamanian National Operations Center (CON, by its initials in Spanish) submitted a request for inter-institutional support to the Red Cross Society of Panama to provide assistance, especially through health services, to the population affected by demonstrations and road blockages during the social unrest that is currently affecting the country. Recognizing the Red Cross's neutrality and auxiliary role in supporting public authorities, the National Society started to provide prehospital care services on October 30 and decided to request funding from the IFRC-DREF given the escalation of protests nationwide.

Panama is currently facing a series of intense citizen demonstrations as a result of the approval of Law 406, which endorses the contract between the Panamanian government and a mining company, sanctioned on October 20, 2023. These protests, led by the Construction Workers Union, educators, indigenous groups, and young activists, primarily call for the revocation of the mining contract. They also demand that the government declare a mining moratorium and organize a referendum for the public to determine the nation's mining policy (1).

Despite the president's statements, street protests endure in response to the agreement already ratified by the legislature with the subsidiary of the mining company. Opponents argue that this agreement poses environmental risks for both the country and vital water sources required for human consumption. The contract grants the company the rights to extract and sell copper and associated minerals for a 20-year term, with the potential for an additional 20-year extension, all within an open-pit mining area situated in a forested region.

Since October 23, protests have gained momentum, leading to nationwide road blockades that directly impact the economy, transportation, and access to essential services. Local and international media have reported product shortages in supermarkets across several provinces (2), a substantial deployment of security forces, and the use of tear gas to disperse protesters. These demonstrations have paralyzed urban and provincial streets, with demonstrators demanding the contract's annulment, either through legal or executive means.

On October 29, the national government declared its intent to hold a citizen referendum, allowing the Panamanian population to determine whether they want the mining contract to be revoked or upheld. In response to this announcement, organized groups have reaffirmed their commitment to continuing street demonstrations until Law 406 is derogated.

On October 30, the government presented a bill to the National Assembly aimed at regulating the popular consultation to decide the fate of Law No. 406 (3). As per a statement from the Ministry of Government, this bill delegates the responsibility to the Electoral Tribunal to conduct the popular consultation. The Electoral Tribunal has indicated that, to date, the necessary conditions for conducting a public consultation do not exist because they are currently focused on organizing the presidential elections scheduled for May 2024. However, they will be required to do so if the bill becomes law.

Organized groups continue to call on the population to maintain peaceful protests in the streets, and it is anticipated that tensions will persist in the coming days.

Sources:

(1)<https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articles/cl7x74vp7vro>

(2)<https://www.france24.com/es/minuto-a-minuto/20231029-protestas-privan-de-alimentos-al-mayor-mercado-de-la-capital-de-panam%C3%A1>

(3)<http://tiny.cc/MinisterioDeGobierno>



Photo 1. Demonstrations against the mining contract in Panama City, October 26, 2023. Source: LUIS ACOSTA / AFP



Photo 2. Migrants detained in Panama due to demonstrations and blockades in the country. Source: Roberto Cisneros / AFP

## Scope and Scale

Despite the government's announcement of a new mining contract that includes significantly larger annual contributions from the mining company to the Panamanian State compared to the previous agreement, which the government has presented as an economic enhancement, the public remains dissatisfied with this contract. They insist that their concerns regarding environmental and social issues be addressed. These protests have led to tensions and clashes with authorities, resulting in the arrest of protesters and the use of police force to disperse the demonstrations.

In the past week, protests in Panama have been marked by confrontations with the police and the deployment of tear gas. Some businesses have taken security precautions, such as covering their doors and windows with wooden panels. On October 27, a peaceful march organized by young people proceeded along 50th Street in the capital, although skirmishes with the police occurred as the march concluded. The demonstrators, primarily composed of young individuals, persist in their demands for the cancellation of the mining contract, the initiation of a mining moratorium, and a referendum on the country's mining policy.

These protests have triggered a series of adverse events, including numerous clashes between protesters and the national police, as well as incidents of vandalism and theft that are affecting daily life in the country's major urban centers.

As a result of the insecurity stemming from the ongoing protests and demonstrators, educational authorities have mandated the closure of all schools across the nation. Additionally, the administration of the University of Panama, the country's primary institution of higher learning, has also ordered the temporary closure of its campuses, a move that has been followed by some private universities, leading to the suspension of classes.

According to a report from the National Police, over the course of five days of protests, 521 individuals have been apprehended,

including 71 children. They are alleged to have been involved in acts of vandalism, property damage, and other offenses associated with the protests and civil unrest. Additionally, 37 police officers have been reported injured, with reports of damage to 51 commercial establishments and 15 government institutions. In different parts of the country, 37 vehicles have been vandalized as well (1). Furthermore, there have been reports of healthcare personnel being assaulted, ambulances and vehicles transporting patients, and the ill-being vandalized at specific blockade points. Demonstrators argued that they were checking to ensure that no personnel from the national police or other government agencies outside the health sector were being transported.

Regarding the migrant population in transit, they are being transferred from the Temporary Migrant Reception Stations (ETRM, by its initials in Spanish) in Darien to the Temporary Attention Center for Migrants (CATEM, by its initials in Spanish) in Costa Rica. On 24 October, it was reported that at least 32 buses carrying migrants from Darien to Costa Rica were stranded in the Horconcito sector in Chiriqui. On 25 October, another 20 buses left Darien in the area of Cañazas, where roadblocks are still in place. Negotiations took place between the National Migration Service (SNM, by its initials in Spanish) and the National Border Service (SENAFRONT, by its initials in Spanish) to allow them to proceed. However, they were not permitted to pass in San Felix, in the Chiriqui province, prompting the migrants on the buses to continue their journey on foot from San Felix to Paso Canoas (2).

Several localities in the provinces of Darien, Los Santos, Herrera, Chiriqui, and Bocas del Toro have reported fuel shortages and rationing of food supplies by supermarkets and stores. A power generation company, whose production relies on fossil fuels, has issued warnings of potential controlled power outages to manage the electricity supply.

In the province of Bocas del Toro, in the district of Changuinola, the Instituto de Acueductos y Alcantarillados Nacionales (IDAAN, by its initials in Spanish) has announced that supplies necessary for purifying water are running low. This has led to an assessment of water supply rationalization. Due to road closures in the provinces of Darien, Herrera, Los Santos, and Chiriqui, where the primary rice producers are located, substantial losses in rice production are already being reported. The mills are unable to distribute their stored rice during the harvest period, resulting in an estimated loss of 20,000 quintals of rice, a staple food in Panama.

Various fishermen's associations have reported losses due to the inability to sell and transport their products to markets and storage facilities. Throughout the country, there have been reports of significant losses in perishable goods, including vegetables and fruits that have been unable to reach markets and supermarkets. This is already reflected in product shortages in stores nationwide, coupled with price increases.

The Chamber of Commerce, Industries, and Agriculture of Panama (CCIAP, by its initials in Spanish) estimates that the ongoing road closures are resulting in daily losses ranging from US\$60 to US\$90 million (3).

Throughout the protests, the Red Cross Society of Panama has gathered information and considered data provided by government authorities. According to these data, the provinces most affected by the demonstrations and road blockades include Bocas del Toro, Chiriquí, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, Coclé, Panamá Oeste, Panamá, Colón, Darién, as well as the Naso Tjër Di and Ngäbe Bugle Comarcas (4).

Sources:

(1)<https://www.minseg.gob.pa/2023/10/unas-816-persona-han-sido-aprehendidas-en-nueve-dias-por-delitos-de-vandalismo-y-danos-a-la-propiedad/>

(2)<https://twitter.com/tvnnoticias/status/1716796860193513514>

(3)<https://www.metrolibre.com/nacionales/entre-60-y-90-millones-en-perdidas-diarias-por-los-cierres-de-calles-YL5094436>

(4)Comarcas are autonomous territories inhabited by diverse indigenous communities.

## Previous Operations

Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years?	<b>Yes</b>
Did it affect the same population group?	<b>No</b>
Did the National Society respond?	<b>Yes</b>

Did the National Society request funding form DREF for that event(s)	Yes
If yes, please specify which operation	MDRPA016

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

-

#### **Lessons learned:**

While civil unrest has occurred in Panama in the past, it's important to note that the current circumstances stem from widespread social dissatisfaction following the approval of a mining contract. The approval of a contract of this magnitude does not occur regularly, making this situation atypical.

In 2022, the Panamanian Red Cross implemented an IFRC-DREF Operation (MDRPA016) in response to social unrest due to the high cost of the essential family basket, the cost and accessibility of medicines and social security, the cost of fuel, and complaints about issues related to the country's public finances. The experiences and knowledge gained during the implementation of the IFRC-DREF, as well as lessons learned from recent operations conducted by the National Society, have been of utmost importance in guiding the formulation of this new IFRC-DREF request. In particular, the following lessons learned have been considered:

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of affected populations and geographic areas to have solid evidence to support the formulation of appropriate interventions.
- Submit the request for IFRC-DREF funds at a critical time to allow the necessary time for implementation and ensure the relevance of the actions for the benefit of the affected population.
- Recognize the importance of effective and transparent communication as an essential means to counteract disinformation and panic in situations of social unrest. Therefore, clear and updated communication channels will be established to inform both the population and the media in an accurate and timely manner.
- Promote effective collaboration and coordination between local authorities, NGOs, and other key actors. Collaboration and coordination among these groups is critical to ensure a comprehensive and effective response in times of crisis.
- Consider operational security as an essential element in all interventions, taking appropriate precautions about volunteer and management staff, taking into account the context, the situation, and the potential risks to the physical integrity of those involved on behalf of the National Society.

## **Current National Society Actions**

### **National Society Readiness**

The National Society has been taking a number of proactive measures in response to the current situation. Since the beginning of the social demonstrations, it has been carrying out constant follow-up and detailed monitoring of ongoing events. In addition, it has maintained uninterrupted communication between the governing bodies of the National Society and the chairmen and directors of the Local Committees to ensure effective coordination of actions. It has also used networks and alternative media to disseminate information about the National Society's auxiliary role with emphasis on the current situation.

From the National Society Headquarters, a thorough review and efficient organization of all available equipment and supplies has been carried out, preparing comprehensively for any possible intervention. In addition, it has provided general instructions to all local committees on how they should carry out actions on behalf of the National Society, ensuring protection, and respect for fundamental principles, as well as the provision of pre-hospital care and first aid at the different points of closure and demonstrations.

	<p>In an additional effort, the National Society has issued instructions to the management teams and staff of shelters for adults and children to ensure that their activities are not disrupted due to road closures and blockades. The National Society maintains the provision of first aid and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) to those injured and wounded during the clashes between protesters and authorities.</p>
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p>The Red Cross Society of Panama has deployed assessment teams composed of volunteers and trained personnel to address and analyze the current situation resulting from the riots and road closures throughout the country. The staff is engaged in data collection and assessment of the immediate needs of the affected population. Through this assessment process, the National Society is identifying areas requiring urgent assistance and coordinating efforts to provide effective humanitarian support in the midst of the crisis.</p> <p>In addition, the operational security area has been working on a context analysis in order to ensure the safety of all volunteers and to make the relevant recommendations as the case may be and the situation varies at the different points of concentration of demonstrators.</p> <p>The National Society Emergency Operations Center is responsible for issuing communiqués and disseminating the results of the information gathering.</p>
<p><b>Coordination</b></p>	<p>The Red Cross Society of Panama has maintained constant communication with state authorities and has shared relevant information with the components of the Movement, with the purpose of keeping everyone informed about the current situation. In addition, discussions are being considered with the organized groups and civil society that are part of the protesters. The main objective is to ensure that any intervention is carried out safely and in cooperation with all parties involved, in order to promote the peaceful resolution of the crisis and the protection of the affected population. The three components of the Movement with a presence in the country have issued a tripartite communiqué regarding the internal tensions, which has been widely disseminated.</p> <p>The maintains continuous communication and coordination with the 23 local committees in order to identify their operational capacity in terms of logistics and personnel, ensuring that, should an intervention be necessary, they have the minimum resources required to carry out an effective action. In addition, the National Society has coordinated internal actions between management staff and shelters for the elderly and children, ensuring that they have the necessary conditions in terms of mobility, security, connectivity, and minimum resources to support interventions, without interrupting the provision of services.</p>
<p><b>Activation Of Contingency Plans</b></p>	<p>The Red Cross Society of Panamas has activated its protocol for assistance in the event of civil unrest, which establishes the formation of a political-strategic decision room to guarantee effective coordination in all areas of the system, ensuring efficient decision-making and accountability. This room is composed of the president and vice president, the director and deputy director general, the head of Risk Management, the head of the Emergency Operations Center, and the national directors of the voluntary agencies.</p>
<p><b>National Society EOC</b></p>	<p>The Red Cross Society of Panama has launched its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in order to conduct a thorough assessment of the current situation in the midst of the protests and clashes. The EOC has been established as a central point for gathering accurate and timely data in order to fully understand the magnitude of the crisis and the most urgent needs of the affected population. Based on this information, a concrete action plan is being developed that will allow the Red Cross</p>

	Society of Panama to address this situation in a coordinated and strategic manner, providing humanitarian assistance where it is most needed.
<b>Migration</b>	<p>The Red Cross Society of Panama has been providing assistance and protection to a group of people who are in the Temporary Migration Reception Stations (ETRM, by its initials in Spanish) and other points where their mobility has been affected due to blockades preventing the transit of buses.</p> <p>The National Society continues to monitor the situation at the main points of concentration of migrants, where an increase in the number of people is anticipated due to the impossibility of crossing the border with Costa Rica. Adjustments have been made to the operational strategy of the Emergency Appeal, with the aim of reaching people with elements of assistance and, at the same time, identifying specific protection needs. Some resources from the Emergency Appeal have been redirected to provide assistance on the road, providing safe water, snacks, prehospital care and the dissemination of key information messages to keep people informed about events and prevent possible confrontations.</p> <p>For additional information on the Emergency Appeal, go to <a href="https://www.ifrc.org/emergency/mexico-central-american-migration-crisis">https://www.ifrc.org/emergency/mexico-central-american-migration-crisis</a></p>
<b>Community Engagement And Accountability</b>	The Red Cross Society of Panama has launched a campaign through social networks and some radio media with the purpose of highlighting its fundamental role as an auxiliary entity in the midst of demonstrations. The main objective of this campaign is to emphasize the importance of guaranteeing safe access to injured and affected people during protests, as well as the free circulation of emergency vehicles and ambulances. These communications seek to raise awareness among the population about the need to facilitate the work of the National Society, which in turn allows to save lives and provide humanitarian assistance in an effective manner.

## IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

<b>Secretariat</b>	<p>The Red Cross Society of Panama has received direct and continuous support from the IFRC, mainly through the Country Cluster Delegation for Central America. In addition, through the Migration Appeal, the IFRC has granted the necessary authorization for the National Society to reallocate specific funds, considering the increased demands of the migrant population in the current context of the country.</p> <p>As part of this operation, the CCD for Central America provided support and technical advice for the development of this DREF Application. In addition, the IFRC joined the statement issued on behalf of the Movement, urging respect for and protection of the medical mission, facilitation of safe passage and prevention of shortages of food and essential medicines in the context of internal tensions and unrest in Panama.</p>
<b>Participating National Societies</b>	The American Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross Society, the Spanish Red Cross, and the Swizz Red Cross are present in Panama through their regional delegations; however, they are not currently supporting any of the actions proposed in this IFRC-DREF.

# ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

So far, the only collaboration that the ICRC has had in the context of this IFRC-DREF is the participation in the statement issued as a Movement, calling for the respect and protection of the medical mission, the facilitation of safe passage, and the prevention of shortages of food and essential medicines in the context of internal tensions and internal unrest in Panama.

## Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

<b>Government has requested international assistance</b>	No
<b>National authorities</b>	<p>Panama's Ministry of Health (MINSAs, by its initials in Spanish), the Social Security Fund (CSS, by its initials in Spanish), the Single Emergency Management System (SUME 911), and the Panama Fire Department (CBP, by its initials in Spanish) have continued to provide emergency care and patient transport services to the extent possible. This has become especially challenging due to the blockades of streets and avenues, as, in several cases, protesters impede the passage of emergency vehicles or conduct inspections.</p> <p>Both the National Border Service (SENAFRONT, by its initials in Spanish) and the National Migration Service maintain their presence in the provinces of Darien and Chiriqui, as well as in the Temporary Migration Reception Stations, playing a crucial role in control and security tasks. This is carried out in close coordination with the humanitarian actors present in the field.</p>

### Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

The Red Cross Society of Panama, in its auxiliary role, maintains close collaboration with a wide variety of actors, including the Ministry of Government and Justice and the Emergency Operations Center. This collaboration focuses on the development of analyses of the current context and the willingness to carry out inter-institutional actions. At the local level, specific coordination has been established with local actors, such as the regional offices of the Ministry of Health, to coordinate possible interventions in the current context. These coordinations are led by the leadership of each of the local committees.

## Needs (Gaps) Identified



The demonstrations at the national level have generated different conditions and from the health sector need have been identified in two specific areas: Pre-Hospital Care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.

Firstly, it is essential to provide timely pre-hospital care to people injured or with any particular condition during the clashes and demonstrations. Similarly, mental health is profoundly affected by the violence and general instability throughout the country.

During the development of demonstrations, mass mobilizations of people on strike, and street closures, the lack of first aid attention points has been a key factor, during some of these events there have been confrontations between the demonstrators and the public forces, which has resulted in a large number of injuries on both sides. During the demonstrations, the authorities resorted to the use of tear gas and rubber bullets, causing minor injuries to the demonstrators, while the demonstrators used stones, firearms, and pyrotechnics against the authorities, resulting in a large number of injuries. Some of the care that has been provided so far is related to injuries caused by tear gas, various traumas (blows, contusions caused by cans or other materials thrown), vomiting, and fever.

As a result of the current situation, many of the medical unions have joined the strike, which has reduced the capacity of many

hospitals throughout the country. Due to the street closures, ambulances and vehicles used to attend to emergencies have faced problems in accessing patients and reaching different points. Although access to vehicles is currently being provided in an expeditious manner, care and mobilization are being done in a cautious manner, given that at some point at the beginning of the protests some ambulances and vehicles of the Ministry of Health were vandalized.

Due to the large number of road closures and the impossibility of using private or public transportation, many patients have missed their medical appointments, and in general, this situation increases the risk to the life and health of many people, mainly children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Although in some of the road blockades patients are permitted to cross, this is not always the case.



## **Protection, Gender And Inclusion**

Due to the current situation resulting from the demonstrations, it is necessary to ensure protection and the creation of safe spaces for people who in one way or another are assisted by the staff, so it is necessary to incorporate the Protection, Gender, Inclusion (PGI) approach in the actions carried out within the framework of the response.

Safe referrals are a fundamental element in terms of PGI since it is important to take into consideration that at the moment of identifying a specific protection need, the Panamanian Red Cross must make a referral to the corresponding services, mainly health services.

During the development of the "peaceful" demonstrations a large number of children have been observed participating accompanied by their parents, it is pertinent that recommendations are included to protect and safeguard the life and integrity of the children and that they are not exposed to this type of activities where there is a high risk of disturbances and confrontations. Therefore, hygiene kits are also needed to protect the children and the general population that participates in the demonstrations.

Due to the large amount of time people spend in the closures, they are unable to contact their families, which is why it is necessary to mobilize volunteers with equipment for these people to communicate with their families.

The Red Cross Society of Panama is responsible for the operation of a Children's Home, where minors at social risk are housed, and a Shelter for the Elderly, so it is essential to maintain without any interruption the care offered to the especially vulnerable population.



## **Migration**

Due to the current migratory crisis that the country is going through and that for some years has been increasing the number of people moving across borders, the current situation of unrest and protests has directly impacted these groups since the main road (Panamerican Highway) used to move to the border with Costa Rica have been closed and migrants have been trapped at some points without access to accommodation and/or food, so it is necessary to provide support to this group in particular.

There is a need to guarantee the safety of the migrant community, especially in areas where clashes have occurred, and to provide protection against any form of violence or discrimination along the route given that when buses leave the ETRMs and arrive at the blockades people undertake the route on foot, which exposes them to injuries during demonstrations, hunger, thirst, lack of information on the current situation and access to humanitarian assistance to arrive safely at the border with Costa Rica, as well as stress and anxiety due to social unrest.



## **Community Engagement And Accountability**

The Red Cross Society of Panama recognizes the importance of actively involving the community in all stages of its humanitarian operations. In this operation, the following crucial needs are identified that require the implementation of the CEA approach.

As a result of the large amount of information reaching people through the media, social networks, and others about social

instability, economic, food insecurity, and education this can trigger a high level of stress and uncertainty that needs to be addressed.

It is essential to assess both the internal and external perception of the work of the Red Cross Society of Panama. This assessment will allow the identification of rumors and the subsequent creation of audiovisual materials aimed at addressing these rumors, with a specific focus on the priority sectors for this operation. At the same time, it is necessary to establish socialization mechanisms in collaboration with strategic actors for the effective dissemination of these materials, which will facilitate the creation of strategic alliances.

In addition, the imperative need to generate feedback processes, and document and ensure the quality of the actions provided to the affected people is recognized. This is carried out with the purpose of following up on comments, suggestions, and/or complaints that may arise, thus strengthening the quality and relevance of the humanitarian aid provided by the National Society.

## Operational Strategy

### Overall objective of the operation

Through this IFRC-DREF Action Plan, the Red Cross Society of Panama aims to provide direct humanitarian assistance to at least 3,500 people affected by the social unrest in Panama, focusing on pre-hospital care and the provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS). This support will be carried out in the provinces of Bocas del Toro, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, Coclé, Chiriquí, Panamá Oeste, Panamá, Colón, Darién, as well as in the Naso Tjër Di and Ngäbe Bugle Comarcas.

### Operation strategy rationale

The Red Cross Society of Panama will implement this IFRC-DREF action plan for 3 months in the provinces most affected according to evaluations made by the National Society and information shared by national authorities. Should the number of affected people increase, the National Society will review the planned intervention and, if necessary, expand the scope and scale of assistance.

Interventions will focus on health, migration, Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Community Participation and Accountability (CEA), as detailed below:

#### HEALTH:

Focus will be on providing pre-hospital and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services to people affected by the demonstrations. In addition, ambulance services will be available to transport those who require it. The acquisition of first aid kits for a total of 23 committees in priority provinces and 23 kits for the ambulances of these same committees is also included.

In order to strengthen the capacities of the volunteers involved in this operation, training workshops will be held for the volunteers. These workshops will address topics related to pre-hospital care and MHPSS, thus ensuring high quality care that is appropriate to the country's current context.

#### PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION (PGI):

Differentiated hygiene kits, which include items such as small towels for drying, wet wipes, flashlights and notebooks, among other items, will be delivered to people who are at demonstrations or who have been affected by road blockades and need a kit to meet their immediate hygiene needs.

In addition, Restoring Family Links (RFL) services will be offered through internet signal access and calls for those in need, particularly within the demonstrations and road blockades.

Training and refresher workshops will also be conducted for staff and volunteers. These workshops will address PGI-related issues, with the objective of strengthening the capacities of staff and volunteers to ensure that all assistance is provided in a relevant and equitable manner to all people.

#### MIGRATION:

Snack kits will be provided, including energy bars, hydration drinks, chocolate bars, water, dried fruits, among other similar items. In addition, first aid services, pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) will be offered to

migrants who are stranded as a result of roadblocks. These services will be provided to those who require them to ensure their well-being and safety.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA):

Perception surveys will be conducted through social networks to assess the community's perception of the auxiliary role of the Red Cross Society of Panama. This data will be used as input for the creation of an awareness campaign focused on the auxiliary role of the Red Cross Society of Panama, with a special focus on situations of mass demonstrations.

In addition, key messages will be disseminated in both digital and physical format, addressing issues related to self-care and protection. In order to strengthen the National Society's accountability system, feedback channels will be implemented, including a WhatsApp line and a QR Code.

Workshops will also be conducted for volunteers on CEA issues, with a special emphasis on the context of mass demonstrations.

#### SECRETARIAT SERVICES:

IFRC staff will conduct an on-site monitoring visit to directly follow up on the implementation of the actions. In addition, the National Society has conducted an internal needs assessment to strengthen the implementation of the operation. This assessment also considered the particularities of the context and mass demonstrations and determined the need to deploy a rapid response person to fill the position of Security Coordinator.

#### NATIONAL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING:

As part of the security measures for staff and volunteers in emergency operations, the National Society has decided to purchase visibility items for volunteers, such as T-shirts, water bottles and pens with the emblem. The purchase of personal protection and safety equipment for volunteers, including helmets and gas masks, will also be carried out.

To complement these processes, orientation and training workshops on self-care and operational safety will be organized for volunteers. In order to strengthen accountability mechanisms, managers and technical area coordinators at the National Society's headquarters will conduct regular monitoring visits to ensure the correct implementation of these measures and address the needs and concerns of staff and volunteers in the field.

Finally, as part of the final accountability mechanisms for the operation, a lessons learned workshop will be held. This workshop will generate information that will serve as a basis for the National Society to plan, implement and monitor future operations.

To carry out this operation, the Red Cross Society of Panama has initially mobilized 100 volunteers with experience in first aid, pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS). However, should the context evolve and require the intervention of a larger number of volunteers, the National Society is prepared to promote the participation of more volunteers.

The National Society will also take into account the cooperation and constant coordination with government authorities and other organizations in the field. It is ready to work hand in hand with these partners when necessary to strengthen the response and provide the best possible humanitarian assistance to those who need it most.

## Targeting Strategy

### Who will be targeted through this operation?

The Red Cross Society of Panama will provide direct humanitarian assistance to a minimum of 3,500 people from the 10 provinces and 2 Comarcas prioritized, including children, the elderly, people with pre-existing medical conditions, people with disabilities, or those with other specific needs. This assistance will be provided through the implementation of pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS).

The intervention includes people who have been impacted by the demonstrations, such as those who have suffered injuries, property damage, or disruptions to their daily lives due to the street blockades and the migrant community in transit through Panama who have been affected by the road blockades and demonstrations require special attention to ensure their safety and well-being.

This number of people to be assisted directly has been calculated taking into account the National Society's previous experiences in assisting people during demonstrations and situations of violence.

## Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The selection criteria for the target population include:

- Persons injured in demonstrations and civil disturbances taking place in the main intervention points previously identified (10 provinces and 2 Comarcas).
- Persons suffering intoxication or illness after exposure to tear gas and other non-lethal agents used by the authorities.
- Individuals or families in vulnerable situations, including the elderly, children, people with disabilities, single mothers, individuals with chronic diseases, migrant population, among others.
- Population that is not receiving assistance from authorities or humanitarian actors.

## Total Targeted Population

Women	1,200	Rural	30%
Girls (under 18)	200	Urban	70%
Men	1,800	People with disabilities (estimated)	4%
Boys (under 18)	300		
Total targeted population	3,500		

## Risk and Security Considerations

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

Risk	Mitigation action
Insecurity for response staff and volunteers.	<p>Provide operational security training to staff and volunteers, teaching them how to stay safe in protest environments, how to communicate in risky situations, and how to minimize personal risks.</p> <p>Maintain close coordination with local authorities and police to ensure the protection of personnel and ensure safe access to affected areas.</p>
Limited access to the affected population in need of humanitarian assistance.	<p>Maintain constant monitoring of the situation on the ground through real-time security observation and media monitoring to make informed and safe decisions.</p> <p>Provide information to the affected population on how to access humanitarian assistance safely and on the measures they should take to protect their own safety during demonstrations.</p>
Logistical difficulties in delivering supplies and mobilizing personnel to affected areas.	<p>Conduct real-time risk assessments during demonstrations to adapt the humanitarian response according to the situation on the ground.</p> <p>Establish channels of communication with protest organizers</p>

and security forces to facilitate safe access and delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Ensure that National Society staff, volunteers, and vehicles are clearly identified with the emblem to reduce the risk of being confused with other groups.

### Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

The participation of volunteers and staff in this operation faces a number of safety and security risks, considering the ongoing unrest and demonstrations in Panama. Some of the safety and security issues include:

- Exposure to situations of violence in the midst of demonstrations, which puts their personal safety at risk.
- Possible threats or attacks against volunteers and staff due to their participation in relief operations, including intimidation, physical assaults, or damage to property.
- Obstacles to the movement of emergency vehicles, such as ambulances, due to roadblocks, which could delay the Red Cross response to medical emergencies.

## Planned Intervention



### Community Engagement And Accountability

**Budget:** CHF 6,923

**Targeted Persons:** 3,500

#### Indicators

Title	Target
# of people receiving key information on self-care and protection through social networks and physically.	3,500
# of awareness campaigns on the auxiliary role of the Panamanian Red Cross.	1
# of people surveyed through social networks.	1,000

#### Priority Actions

- Conducting perception surveys on the auxiliary role of the Red Cross Society of Panama through social networks.
- Dissemination of key messages digitally and physically on topics related to self-care and protection.
- Development of a socialization campaign on the auxiliary role of the Red Cross Society of Panama with emphasis on mass demonstrations.
- Implementation of feedback channels (WhatsApp line, QR Code).
- Mobilization of staff and volunteers to provide CEA-related services.
- Development of workshops for volunteers on CEA issues with special focus on mass demonstrations.



### Secretariat Services

**Budget:** CHF 23,430

**Targeted Persons:** -

## Indicators

Title	Target
# of monitoring visits conducted during operation.	1
# of rapid response personnel deployed.	1

## Priority Actions

- Monitoring visit by IFRC staff to directly follow up on the execution of actions.
- Deployment of a rapid response person (security coordinator).
- Translation of documents.
- Financial expenses.
- Courier service.



## National Society Strengthening

**Budget:** CHF 30,145

**Targeted Persons:** -

## Indicators

Title	Target
# of volunteers with adequate visibility to carry out the operation.	100
# of volunteers who have received orientation and training in self-care and operational safety.	100

## Priority Actions

- Acquisition of visibility items for volunteers.
- Acquisition of personal protection and safety equipment for volunteers (helmets, gas masks, etc.).
- Workshops for volunteers on orientation and training in self-care and operational safety.
- Follow-up visits by managers and coordinators of technical areas of the National Society's headquarters.
- Development of lessons learned workshop.



## Health

**Budget:** CHF 54,741

**Targeted Persons:** 1,060

## Indicators

Title	Target
# of people who have received pre-hospital care.	1,060
# of volunteers and personnel trained and/or updated in topics related to prehospital care and MHPSS.	100

## Priority Actions

- Provision of pre-hospital and SMAPS services to affected persons.
- Transfer of people requiring the service by ambulance.
- Mobilization of personnel and volunteers to provide pre-hospital care and MHPSS.
- Procurement of first aid kits for ambulances for up to 23 committees in priority provinces.
- Procurement of first aid kits for 23 committees in priority provinces.
- Maintenance and fuel for ambulances and mobile units used for the operation.
- Development of workshops for volunteers on topics related to pre-hospital care and SMAPS.



## Protection, Gender And Inclusion

**Budget:** CHF 48,777

**Targeted Persons:** 3,000

## Indicators

Title	Target
# of assisted persons receiving differentiated hygiene kits.	2,000
# of people assisted with RFL services.	1,000

## Priority Actions

- Procurement and distribution of differentiated hygiene kits (small towel for drying, wet wipes, sanitary napkins, flashlight, notebook).
- Provision of RFL services (access to internet signal and calls).
- Development of training and/or refresher workshops for staff and volunteers on PGI-related topics.
- Mobilization of staff and volunteers to provide Protection, Gender and Inclusion services to affected populations.
- Construction and dissemination of a safeguarding tool for children in protests or social mobilizations.



## Migration

**Budget:** CHF 8,520

**Targeted Persons:** 2,000

## Indicators

Title	Target
# of migrants who have received assistance during their transit.	2,000

## Priority Actions

- Distribution of snack kits (energy bars, hydration drinks, chocolate bars, water, nuts, etc.).
- Provide first aid, pre-hospital care and SMAPS services for migrants who are affected and require it.

# About Support Services

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

The National Society has planned to purchase supplies, including visibility equipment and personal protective equipment, for a total of 100 volunteers and staff. In addition, the availability of per diem is planned to carry out all planned actions. This number of volunteers may be increased if protests escalate and if the National Society, after an internal assessment, considers it necessary.

Beforehand, the volunteers will receive training and refresher courses on self-care and operational safety. It should be noted that these volunteers have previous experience in the provision of pre-hospital care, as well as in the field of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies.

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

The National Society prioritizes the safety of staff and volunteers in response to demonstrations and unrest throughout the country. Given the risks associated with these protests, a Surge Security Coordinator has been included. This professional will play a key role in the planning and execution of relief operations, ensuring safety standards at all times.

The Security Coordinator will assess risks, identify areas of concern, establish safety protocols and provide specialized training to staff and volunteers. Their presence will ensure a safe and efficient response, reducing the risks associated with demonstrations. The safety of those involved in the operation is a top priority, and the inclusion of a Security Coordinator will ensure a safe environment. The National Society will request support from the IFRC through the surge mechanism to have this position in place.

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

Panama offers a large market that provides the opportunity to procure a variety of supplies and services from multiple suppliers. Accordingly, all procurement related to this operation will be managed locally by the Red Cross Society of Panama, following IFRC standard procurement procedures. The IFRC Regional Logistics Unit in Panama will be available to provide guidance and support as needed.

The Panamanian Red Cross has an organizational structure that enables it to carry out procurement, storage and transportation processes as an integral part of the logistics chain of humanitarian operations. The National Society's management body has a specific department responsible for the procurement of goods and services. In addition, it has established financial procedures and an accounting and auditing control system that is supervised by the General Directorate. This system is recognized and used by Participating National Societies and donors in general.

## How will this operation be monitored?

The Red Cross Society of Panama has a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting Officer as part of the National Society's management body, who will direct follow-up actions as established by the National Society, as well as particular requirements of the IFRC-DREF. Reports will be prepared and sent in a timely manner throughout the operation. In addition, there will be direct support from the IFRC CCD for Central America during the life of the IFRC-DREF. In addition, a lessons-learned workshop based on the IFRC methodology will be held at the end of the operation.

The National Society has an accounting department that supports the implementation of financial resources in accordance with the established conditions and the plan's budget. The management of financial resources will be carried out in accordance with the National Society's regulations and in line with what is established for the use of IFRC-DREF funds. For the justification of expenditures, in addition to the National Society's own procedures, IFRC formats will be used. In accordance with IFRC-DREF procedures, the operation will not cover permanent structural expenses, but only expenses incurred during the three months of operation.

## **Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation**

The communication strategy of the Red Cross Society of Panama, to address the current situation, focuses on a comprehensive campaign through social networks and alternative media. Its main objective is to inform the community about the auxiliary role of the Red Cross, highlighting its principles of Neutrality and Impartiality. In addition, it will provide tips to ensure personal safety and recommendations to take care of mental health.

The campaign planned in the context of the IFRC-DREF, will be conducted primarily on social media platforms, using clear and accessible messages to reach both the affected population and society at large. Its purpose is to foster a deeper understanding of the Red Cross and its humanitarian mission while offering guidance on how to stay safe and preserve mental wellbeing in times of crisis.

# Budget Overview



## DREF OPERATION

### MDRPA018 - Red Cross Society of Panama Panama: Civil Unrest

#### Operating Budget

<b>Planned Operations</b>	<b>118.961</b>
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	0
Health	54.741
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	48.777
Education	0
Migration	8.520
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	6.923
Environmental Sustainability	0
<b>Enabling Approaches</b>	<b>53.575</b>
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	23.430
National Society Strengthening	30.145
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>172.535</b>

*all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)*

# Contact Information

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

**National Society contact:** Daniel González, Head of Risk Management, [daniel.gonzalez@cuzroja.org.pa](mailto:daniel.gonzalez@cuzroja.org.pa)

**IFRC Appeal Manager:** Nelson Aly Rodriguez, Head of Delegation, [nelson.alyrodriguez@ifrc.org](mailto:nelson.alyrodriguez@ifrc.org)

**IFRC Project Manager:** Mariela Gómez, Disaster Management Coordinator, [mariela.gomez@ifrc.org](mailto:mariela.gomez@ifrc.org)

**IFRC focal point for the emergency:** Mariela Gómez, Disaster Management Coordinator, [mariela.gomez@ifrc.org](mailto:mariela.gomez@ifrc.org)

[Click here for the reference](#)