



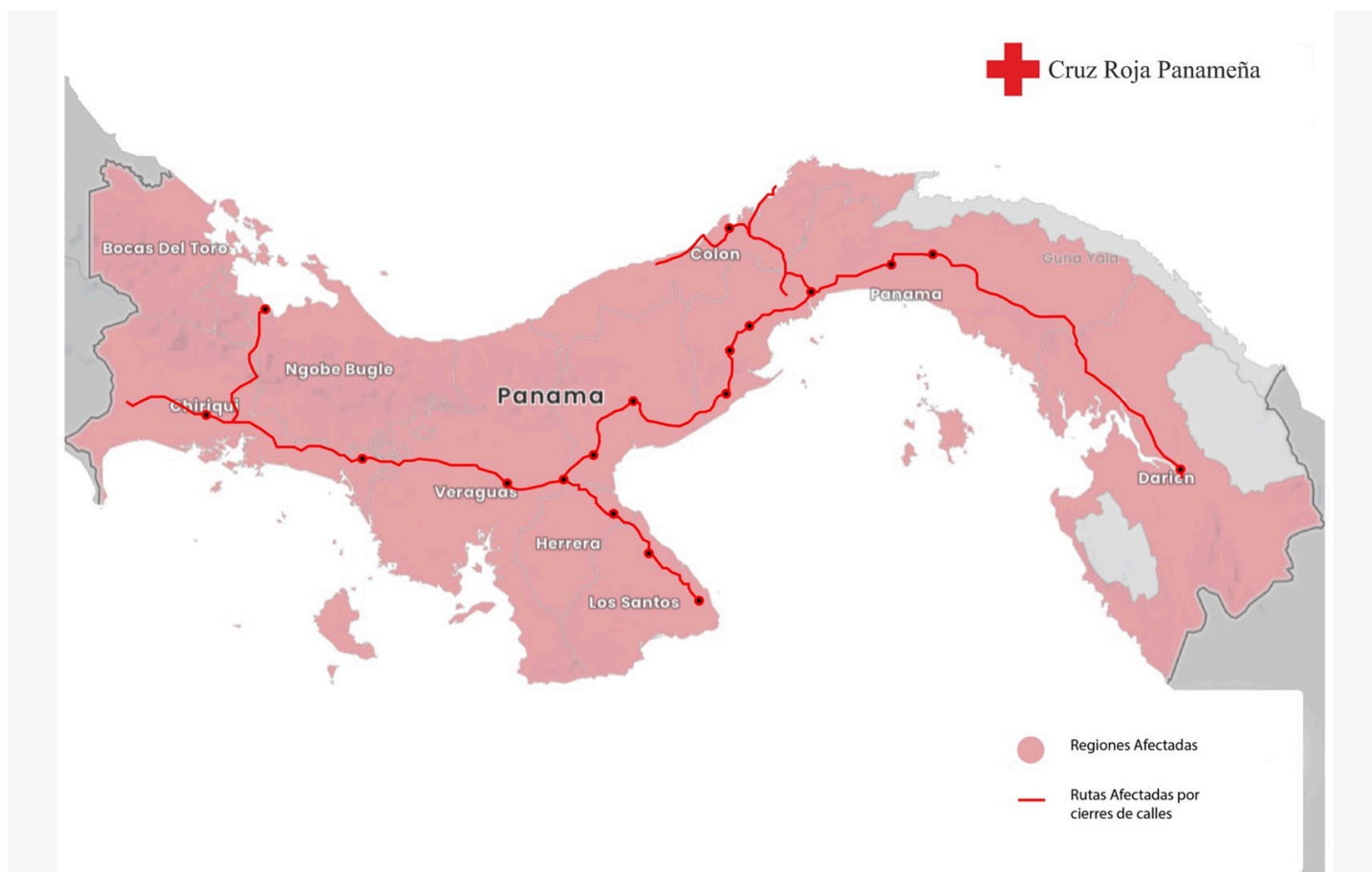
Volunteers of the Red Cross Society of Panama present at one of the demonstrations to provide pre-hospital care. November 2023.
Source: RCSP

Appeal: MDRPA018	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 172,535	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Civil Unrest
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 2,000,000 people	People Targeted: 3,500 people	
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 05-11-2023	Operational End Date: 29-02-2024	Total Operating Timeframe: 3 months

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

The major donors and partners of the IFRC-DREF include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, China, Czech, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the Netherlands, as well as DG ECHO, Mondelez Foundation, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Description of the Event



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

Date of event

27-10-2023

What happened, where and when?

On October 27, 2023, Panama's National Operations Center (NOC, by its initials in Spanish) submitted a request for inter-agency support to the Panama Red Cross Society to assist, especially through health services, the population affected by demonstrations and road closures during the social unrest that was affecting the country. Recognizing the neutrality and auxiliary role of the Red Cross in supporting public authorities, the National Society began providing pre-hospital care services on October 30 and decided to request funding from the IFRC-DREF as protests escalated.

Panama was facing a series of citizen demonstrations following the approval of Law 406, which endorsed the contract between the Panamanian government and a mining company and was sanctioned on October 20, 2023. These protests were led by the construction workers' union, educators, indigenous groups, and young activists, who mainly requested the repeal of the mining law. They also demanded that the government declare a mining moratorium and organize a referendum for the citizens to determine the nation's mining policy.

Despite the president's statements, protests in the streets throughout the country continued and demanding a response to the agreement that had already been ratified by the legislative body with the mining company. Opponents argued that the agreement between the Panamanian government and the mining company posed environmental risks both to the country and to water sources vital for human consumption. The contract granted 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 located in a forested region.

On October 29, the national government declared its intention to hold a citizens' referendum, which would allow the Panamanian population to determine whether they wanted the mining contract to be revoked or maintained. In response to this announcement, organized groups reaffirmed their commitment to continue with street demonstrations until Law 406 was repealed.

On October 30, the government submitted to the National Assembly a bill to regulate the popular consultation to decide on Law No. 406 (3). According to a communiqué from the Ministry of Government, this bill delegated the responsibility to the Electoral Tribunal to carry out the popular consultation. However, the Electoral Tribunal stated that at that time there were no conditions to carry out a public consultation because they were focused on the organization of the presidential elections scheduled for May 2024.

On November 27, 2023, the Supreme Court of Justice issued a ruling on the unconstitutionality of Law 406 (4). The ruling was published in the Official Gazette, complying with the terms established by the National Constitution for the due confirmation of the Court's ruling.



Red Cross National Society of Panama volunteers providing first aid on one of the blocked routes. November 2023. Source: RCNSP



Red Cross National Society of Panama staff and volunteers on mediation tour. October 2023. Source: RCNSP

Scope and Scale

Despite the government's announcement of a new mining contract that included significantly higher annual contributions to the Panamanian state compared to the previous agreement, citizens remained dissatisfied, demanding attention to their environmental and social concerns. The protests provoked tensions and confrontations with the authorities, resulting in the arrest of protesters and the use of police force to disperse the demonstrations. Clashes with police and the use of tear gas were common, and some businesses took security precautions. A peaceful march organized by youths ended in skirmishes with police, with protesters demanding the annulment of the mining contract, a mining moratorium, and a referendum on the country's mining policy.

The protests caused numerous clashes between protesters and police, as well as incidents of vandalism and robberies that affected daily life in the main urban centers. The insecurity led educational authorities to close all schools in the country, and the University of Panama, along with some private universities, also suspended classes. According to a National Police report, 816 people were arrested, 108 of them minors. They are accused of having participated in acts of vandalism, damage to property, and other crimes.

The migrant population in transit was also affected, with buses stranded and migrants forced to continue their journey on foot. Several provinces reported fuel shortages and food rationing, and one energy company warned of possible controlled power outages. In Bocas del Toro, drinking water supplies were at risk due to a lack of purification supplies, and rice and other agricultural production suffered heavy losses due to road blockages. Fishermen's associations and perishable food producers also reported significant losses, leading to shortages in stores and price increases.

Panama's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, and Agriculture estimated that the road closures were causing daily losses of between US\$60 million and US\$90 million (5). The provinces most affected by the demonstrations and blockades included Bocas del Toro, Chiriqui, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, Coclé, Panama Oeste, Panama, Colon, Darien, and the Naso Tjër Di and Ngäbe Bugle Comarcas.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
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1. Ministry of Presidency - Executive Branch publishes in Official Gazette ruling of unconstitutionality of Law 406.	https://www.presidencia.gob.pa/Noticias/Organo-Ejecutivo-publica-en-Gaceta-Oficial-fallo-de-inconstitucionalidad-de-la-Ley-406-que-aprobo-el-Contrato-Ley
2. BBC - 5 keys to understand the massive protests in Panama.	https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articles/cl7x74vp7vro
3. France24 - Protests deprive the largest market in Panama's capital of food.	https://www.france24.com/es/minuto-a-minuto/20231029-protestas-privan-de-alimentos-al-mayor-mercado-de-la-capital-de-panam%C3%A1
4. Metro Libre - Report of daily losses due to road closures.	https://www.metrolibre.com/nacionales/entre-60-y-90-millones-en-perdidas-diarias-por-los-cierres-de-calles-YL5094436
5. Ministry of Government - Minister of Government presents bill for popular consultation.	http://tiny.cc/MinisterioDeGobierno

National Society Actions

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

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	<p>The Red Cross Society of Panama received direct and continuous support from the IFRC, mainly through the Cluster Delegation for Central America. In addition, through the Migration Appeal, the IFRC granted the necessary authorization for the National Society to reallocate specific funds, considering the growing demands of the migrant population in the country.</p> <p>In addition, the IFRC joined the statement issued on behalf of the Movement, urging respect 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>
Participating National Societies	No PNS support was received for the implementation of this IFRC-DREF Operation.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The ICRC was part of 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 unrest in Panama.
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Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	<p>Panama Ministry of Health (MINSAL, by its Spanish acronym), the Social Security Fund (CSS), the Single Emergency Management System (SUME 911), and the Panama Fire Department (CBP, by its Spanish acronym) continued to provide emergency care and patient transport services. On many occasions the protesters prevented the passage of emergency vehicles or conducted inspections.</p> <p>Both the National Border Service (SENAFRONT, by its Spanish acronym) and the National Migration Service maintained their presence in the provinces of Darien and Chiriqui, as well as in the Temporary Migrant Reception Stations, playing a role in control and security tasks. This was 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, maintained close collaboration with a wide variety of actors, including the Ministry of Government and Justice and the Emergency Operations Center (COE). This collaboration focused on the development of analyses of the current context and the willingness to carry out inter-institutional actions. At the local level, coordination was established with local actors, such as the regional offices of the Ministry of Health, to coordinate joint care. These coordinations were led by each of the local branches of the National Society.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



During the demonstrations and road blockades, the Red Cross Society of Panama identified several health care needs. The lack of first aid points resulted in inadequate pre-hospital care, with numerous people injured in clashes between protesters and public forces, where authorities used tear gas and rubber bullets, while protesters used stones, firearms, and pyrotechnics, causing a variety of traumas and minor injuries. Hospital capacity was reduced due to the strike by medical unions, affecting care in many hospitals across the country. Street closures caused access difficulties for ambulances and emergency vehicles, and although expedited access was eventually provided, the risk of vandalism to ambulances and MoH vehicles persisted. In addition, the inability to use private or public transportation due to road closures resulted in missed medical appointments for many patients, including children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and people with chronic medical conditions, increasing the risk to their lives and health. In some blockades, patients were allowed to pass through, but not in all cases. Finally, the violence and general instability significantly impacted the mental health of the population, generating a high level of stress and uncertainty that required urgent psychosocial and mental health support.



Due to the demonstrations, it was necessary to ensure protection and the creation of safe spaces for the people assisted, incorporating the Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) approach in the response actions. Safe referrals were a fundamental element in terms of PGI, since, upon identifying a specific need for protection, the Red Cross Society of Panama had to refer to the corresponding services, mainly health services. During the demonstrations, a large number of children were observed participating accompanied by their parents, which made it pertinent to include recommendations to protect and safeguard the life and integrity of children and avoid their exposure to activities with a high risk of disturbances and confrontations. Due to the long time people spent in the closures, they were unable to communicate with their families, so it was necessary to mobilize volunteers with equipment to facilitate communication with their loved ones. In addition, the National Society was responsible for the operation of a Children's Home and a Shelter for the Elderly, so it was essential to maintain uninterrupted care for this particularly vulnerable population.





Migration And Displacement

Due to the migration crisis in the country, which has grown in recent years, the situation of unrest and social protests directly impacted people on the move. The closure of the Pan-American Highway left migrants stranded at several points without access to food and lodging, which called for urgent support. In addition, the safety of migrants was at risk, especially in areas where clashes occurred, exposing them to violence and discrimination. The lack of information and access to humanitarian assistance aggravated their situation, leaving them uninformed and without the necessary assistance to safely reach the border with Costa Rica. This situation also generated high levels of stress and anxiety among migrants, increasing their mental and emotional health problems.



Community Engagement And Accountability

The Red Cross Society of Panama has several needs in the framework of the implementation of the IFRC-DREF. The large amount of information on social instability, economic, food and educational insecurity generated a high level of stress and uncertainty in the community, which highlighted the need to implement communication strategies to manage information and reduce community stress. In addition, the lack of evaluation of the internal and external perceptions of the work of the National Society revealed the importance of conducting evaluations to identify rumors and create audiovisual materials to address them. The need to establish socialization mechanisms in collaboration with strategic actors to ensure the effective dissemination of information and facilitate the creation of strategic alliances was also identified. Finally, the lack of feedback processes and documentation of the quality of the actions provided was recognized, stressing the importance of implementing these processes to continue learning about comments, suggestions, and complaints, thus ensuring the quality of the humanitarian aid provided.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Through this IFRC-DREF Action Plan, the Red Cross Society of Panama aimed 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 was 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 Comarcas Naso Tjër Di and Ngäbe Bugle.

The National Society reached 1,667 people through first aid, pre-hospital care, and Psychosocial and Mental Health Support (MHPSS) services, 500 people through the distribution of differentiated hygiene kits for women, 1,054 people through Restoring Family Links (RFL) services, 2,000 people with snack kits; and 13,741 people with key information on self-care and protection, both through social networks and in person.

Operation strategy rationale

The Red Cross Society of Panama implemented this IFRC-DREF action plan for 3 months in the most affected provinces based on assessments made by the National Society and information shared by the national authorities. If the number of affected people increased, the National Society would review the planned intervention and, if necessary, expand the scope and scale of assistance.

Interventions focused on health, migration, Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), as detailed below:

HEALTH: The focus was on providing pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) to people affected by the demonstrations. In addition, ambulance services were made available to transport those who required them. It also included the purchase of first aid kits for a total of 23 committees in the priority provinces and 23 kits for the ambulances of these same committees.

To strengthen the capacities of the volunteers involved in this operation, training workshops were held on topics related to pre-hospital care and the MHPSS, thus guaranteeing high-quality care in accordance with the country's current context.

PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION (PGI): Differentiated hygiene kits, which included items such as small towels for drying, wet wipes, flashlights, and notebooks, among others, were delivered to women who participated in demonstrations or who were affected by road blockades and needed a kit to cover their immediate hygiene needs.

In addition, Restoring Family Links services were offered. (RFL) services were provided through internet signal access and calls for those



in need, particularly during demonstrations and road blockades.

Training and refresher workshops were conducted for staff and volunteers on PGI-related issues to strengthen their capacities and ensure that all assistance was provided in a relevant and equitable manner to all people.

MIGRATION: Snack kits were provided, which included energy bars, hydration drinks, chocolate bars, water, dried fruits, among other similar items. In addition, first aid, pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services were provided to migrants who were stranded due to roadblocks. These services were provided to those in need to ensure their well-being and safety.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA): Perception surveys were conducted through social networks to assess the community's perception of the auxiliary role of the Panama Red Cross Society. This data was used as input for the creation of an awareness campaign focused on the auxiliary role of the National Society, with special attention to situations of mass demonstrations.

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

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

SECRETARIAT SERVICES: IFRC staff conducted an on-site monitoring visit to directly follow up on the implementation of the actions. In addition, the National Society 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.

STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL SOCIETY: As part of the security measures for staff and volunteers in emergency operations, the National Society decided to purchase visibility items for volunteers, such as T-shirts, water bottles and pens with the emblem. Personal protection and safety equipment was also purchased for volunteers, including helmets and gas masks.

To complement these processes, orientation and training workshops on self-care and operational safety were organized for volunteers. To strengthen accountability mechanisms, area managers and technical coordinators at the National Society's headquarters conducted 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 operation's accountability mechanisms, a lessons learned workshop was held. This workshop generated 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 initially mobilized 100 volunteers with experience in first aid, pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). However, should the context evolve and require the intervention of a larger number of volunteers, the National Society would be prepared to promote the participation of more volunteers.

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

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

The Red Cross Society of Panama planned to provide direct humanitarian assistance to a minimum of 3,500 people in 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 was provided through the implementation of pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS).

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

The target number of people directly assisted was 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 included:

-Persons injured in demonstrations and civil disturbances that took place in the main points of intervention previously identified (10 provinces and 2 Comarcas).

-People who suffered 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, and the migrant population, among others.

-Population that was 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 and security forces to facilitate safe access and delivery of humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Ensure that National Society staff, volunteers, and vehicles are</p>



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 meant that they faced a series of security risks, among them:

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

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

Yes

Implementation



Budget: CHF 54,741

Targeted Persons: 1,060

Assisted Persons: 1,317

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people who have received pre-hospital care.	1,060	1,317
# of volunteers and personnel trained and/or updated in topics related to prehospital care and MHPSS.	100	100

Narrative description of achievements

The Red Cross National Society of Panama provided first aid, pre-hospital services and mental health and psychosocial support to people affected by the demonstrations. For first aid and pre-hospital services, 50 complete first aid kits and their supplies were acquired for restocking, which were distributed in the committees with the greatest demand for services, and 5 tarpaulins to strengthen the spaces where the services were provided. Given the context and the demand for these services, 1,254 people were reached, more patients than had been initially planned. In addition, patients were transported to and from hospitals in support of the health authorities, with a total of 63 ambulance transfers.

To strengthen the capacities of personnel and volunteers active in the operation, training workshops were organized for 100 people. These workshops addressed topics related to pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies (MHPSS), thus ensuring the continuity of high quality care appropriate to the emergency context.

In order to ensure the protection and safety of personnel and volunteers during the care, amidst the climate of tension and even confrontations between demonstrators and law enforcement units, 200 helmets and 100 half-face masks with specific respiratory protection filters for particles used in the tear gas used by the National Police to disperse the demonstrations were purchased.



Lessons Learnt

The mobilization of civil society, both in terms of the number of people and the number of rally and demonstration points, exceeded all projections. Effective preparation, especially with regard to the prepositioning of first aid supplies and personal protective equipment for volunteers, made it possible to provide quality care from the outset of the emergency.

Challenges

Due to the road blockades, the rapid distribution of personal protection equipment for volunteers was affected, as suppliers suffered delays from the time of purchase of this equipment.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 48,777

Targeted Persons: 3,000

Assisted Persons: 1,554

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of assisted persons receiving differentiated hygiene kits.	2,000	500
# of people assisted with RFL services.	1,000	1,054

Narrative description of achievements

The Red Cross National Society of Panama distributed differentiated hygiene kits for women who were in, or were affected by, road blockades and needed to cover their immediate hygiene needs. In order to assist the affected population as soon as possible, a first purchase of 500 differentiated hygiene kits was made directly in the province of Chiriqui, which were delivered on the road to the province of Veraguas, since the Pan-American Highway was blocked in more than 20 points of the country. All the kits were distributed.

Subsequently, an additional purchase of 2,000 differentiated hygiene kits was made to complete the number of people initially planned to attend, and due to a budget adjustment, it was planned to purchase more kits to reach more people. However, this purchase was received extemporaneously to the emergency due to closures and delays in the mobilization of goods to and from Panama City. Given this situation, the National Society determined that it was no longer appropriate to distribute them and sent them to the IFRC's logistics unit to be pre-positioned and used in future similar emergencies, according to the guidelines established by the IFRC.

The National Society also provided Restoring Family Links (RFL) services through Internet signal access and calls to those who needed it, especially in the context of the demonstrations and road blockades, reaching a larger number of people than initially estimated. This service was able to assist 1,054 people.

Finally, the training and refresher workshops for staff and volunteers on topics related to Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) could not be carried out, since the staff who would act as facilitators could not travel from the province of Darien to the capital city due to road blockades in that sector of the country. In addition, they could not be carried out virtually because the signal strength to achieve connectivity was very low, a situation resulting from the saturation of the telephone and internet signal due to the number of people concentrated at various points along the road.

Lessons Learnt

- The National Society needs to establish a mechanism for prepositioning items and goods for recurrent use in emergency, disaster and crisis response in the different regions of the country. This will make it possible to provide assistance in a more pertinent and effective manner.
- There is a need to strengthen technical capacities, especially in terms of the number of specialists and facilitators in Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI). It is essential to have a national team trained in this area, not concentrated in a single geographic sector or in the Migration Program. This will facilitate the socialization of knowledge and key messages in emergency, disaster or crisis response scenarios.



Challenges

- Despite having three cell phone and internet companies in the country, connectivity and signal strength problems made it difficult at times to provide optimal services.
- Delays on the part of the providers significantly affected many of the planned services.



Migration And Displacement

Budget: CHF 8,520

Targeted Persons: 2,000

Assisted Persons: 2,350

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of migrants who have received assistance during their transit.	2,000	2,350

Narrative description of achievements

At identified and evaluated points along the Pan-American Highway, the Red Cross distributed 2,000 snack kits (energy bars, hydration drinks, water, nuts, etc.) to migrants who were stranded due to roadblocks and demonstrations. In addition, 350 migrants were assisted through first aid services, pre-hospital care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Emergency Support Services (MHPSS).

Lessons Learnt

Planning the distribution of snack kits for the mobile population requires specific planning from the beginning of the operation to ensure that their content is relevant, especially in cultural terms.

Challenges

Reach the areas of greatest need due to the number of blockades on the main roads.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 6,923

Targeted Persons: 3,500

Assisted Persons: 13,741

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people receiving key information on self-care and protection through social networks and physically.	3,500	12,741
# of awareness campaigns on the auxiliary role of the Panamanian Red Cross.	1	1
# of people surveyed through social networks.	1,000	1,000



Narrative description of achievements

Initially, the Red Cross Society of Panama applied 1,000 perception surveys through its official social networks to know the perception of the communities on the auxiliary role of the National Society. Based on the results, a digital information and awareness campaign was created to publicize this role, with special emphasis on demonstrations. The campaign messages addressed the protection of the Red Cross emblem, the fundamental principles, the mission of personnel and volunteers, the identification of mobile units and their mission, as well as the identification of personnel and volunteers, among other topics. The reach of this campaign was 57,595 people.

The results of the survey also contributed to generate evidence that was taken into account to create key messages, which were distributed in both physical (stickers, buttons for backpacks, T-shirts, etc.) and digital formats. These messages addressed issues related to self-care and protection in the context of demonstrations, with emphasis on vulnerable population groups such as children, pregnant women, people with disabilities and the elderly. These messages reached 12,741 people.

In addition, to strengthen the National Society accountability system, mechanisms such as suggestion boxes were implemented at different points where services were provided and workshops were held for staff and volunteers on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), with emphasis on the context of social demonstrations. A total of 162 people nationwide participated in these workshops.

More people were reached than expected, since the National Society identified from the beginning the lack of information, mainly on its role, as well as on the protection and care measures that people should take in the context of the demonstrations. Therefore, adjustments were made in the planning to contribute to this lack of information.

Lessons Learnt

- The payment of radio spots to expand coverage and reach, as well as the exposure of members of the National Society governance in the media (TV and radio), had very positive effects on the dissemination of key messages and the mitigation of possible reputational risks, such as the misuse of the Red Cross emblem by companies for the transfer of goods and supplies.
- The Communication and Public Relations area of the National Society should be involved in the coordination processes together with the political-strategic level of the Emergency Operations Center from the moment of activation for emergency, disaster and crisis response, in order to establish action plans that enhance accountability to the community regarding the actions that are implemented.

Challenges

- Few people who participated in the demonstrations used social networks to fill out surveys, which slowed down the process of data collection through these media.
- In the local intervention branches, there was no staff specifically dedicated to the development of photographic or video material, causing delays in the publication in social networks and digital media.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 23,430

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of monitoring visits conducted during operation.	1	0
# of rapid response personnel deployed.	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

Given the nature of this IFRC-DREF, from the outset the Red Cross National Society of Panama planned to mobilize a rapid response person as security coordinator for the operation. With this technical accompaniment, it was not only possible to make the pertinent revisions to the National Society existing action protocols, but also to enrich the procedures and checklists inherent to the reduction of



operational risks.

As part of the progress of the response designed for this emergency, the security coordinator made a technical visit to the Darien area to learn about the situation of migrants stranded in that province due to the multiple roadblocks. In addition, face-to-face workshops were held in other regions of the country, allowing the security coordinator to make two additional visits to supervise actions in the branches in the interior of the country and in the province of Chiriqui.

Initially, the Society had planned to mobilize the security coordinator for three months. However, given the necessity of his role in the context, an extension of one more month was requested to complete the actions planned within the framework of the IFRC-DREF. The National Society, through other funds, supplemented the expenses for this extension.

An operational monitoring visit by the Disaster Management Coordinator of the IFRC Central America Cluster delegation had also been planned, but due to the difficulty of mobilization due to road closures, it was not carried out and was followed up virtually.

Lessons Learnt

Having a security coordinator enabled the National Society to strengthen its security mechanisms, especially in the face of civil unrest. This provides the National Society with more technical input and experience for future similar operations.

Challenges

Due to the constant road blockades, field visits had to be postponed, which delayed some actions and, in some cases, forced the suspension of mobilizations to protect the safety of personnel.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 30,145

Targeted Persons: 100

Assisted Persons: 371

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers with adequate visibility to carry out the operation.	100	100
# of volunteers who have received orientation and training in self-care and operational safety.	100	371

Narrative description of achievements

Due to the multiple blockades of the Pan-American Highway and the effects on the physical and mental health of the people retained in these blockades, the Red Cross National Society of Panama made the necessary arrangements and carried out four tours to mediate directly with the protesting groups and promote the transit of food and essential medicines. These efforts were crucial, since at several points there was a shortage of medicines, affecting the health of patients.

To improve the visibility of personnel and vehicles in the execution of IFRC-DREF actions, 50 flags with an indicative emblem were acquired and staff and volunteers were provided with institutional sweaters. In addition, 100 visibility kits (shirts/bibs) were purchased and all volunteers were insured, considering that the operation had nationwide coverage. For the amount paid, the National Society was able to extend the insurance coverage to one calendar year at no additional cost.

Virtual orientation and training workshops on self-care and operational safety were organized for volunteers and management personnel, reaching 371 people. Due to the modality chosen, it was possible to reach more staff and volunteers than originally planned. To reinforce operational safety mechanisms, face-to-face workshops were also held for the personnel of the branches of Santiago, La Villa, Chitré, Las Tablas, David, Barú, Boquete, Darién, Changuinola, Isla Bocas, and a session at the Albroom National Headquarters for the branches of La Chorrera, Arraiján, Panamá Norte, San Miguelito, Colón and San Martín.



As part of the final accountability mechanisms of the operation, a lessons learned workshop was held with the participation of personnel directly involved in the execution of the response (volunteers and management team). This workshop made it possible to share learnings and generate evidence that will serve as a basis for the National Society to plan, execute and supervise future operations.

Lessons Learnt

Mediation tours facilitate mediation between the parties in conflict, which makes it possible to expedite and guarantee access to basic services and supplies, thus avoiding the vulnerability of people's health and lives, especially those of vulnerable groups.

Challenges

Ensure the participation of all staff and volunteers involved in the operation in the training and updating processes due to the multiple parallel actions and limited time.



Financial Report

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRPA018 - Panama - Civil Unrest

Operating Timeframe: 05 nov 2023 to 29 feb 2024

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/11-2024/4	Operation	MDRPA018
Budget Timeframe	2023/11-2024/2	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 21/May/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	172.535
DREF Response Pillar	172.535
Expenditure	-143.372
Closing Balance	29.163

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			0
PO02 - Livelihoods			0
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			0
PO04 - Health	54.741	55.706	-965
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			0
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	48.777	39.804	8.973
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration	8.520	7.301	1.219
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery			0
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	6.923	5.455	1.468
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	118.961	108.266	10.694
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	23.430	12.114	11.316
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	30.145	22.992	7.153
Enabling Approaches Total	53.575	35.106	18.469
Grand Total	172.535	143.372	29.163

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

Please explain variances (if any)

A total of 172,535 CHF was allocated from the DREF Fund for the implementation of this DREF Operation. The Panamanian Red Cross spent a total of 143,372 CHF. The remaining balance of 29,163 CHF will be returned to the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF).

Additionally, 2,000 differentiated hygiene kits for women were not distributed due to late delivery by the supplier. However, the National Society sent them to the IFRC Logistics Unit to be pre-positioned and used in other DREF operations, according to a detailed distribution plan and upon authorization from the IFRC regional DREF focal point.

Contact Information

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

National Society contact: Daniel González, Head of Risk Management, daniel.gonzalez@cruzroja.org.pa

IFRC Appeal Manager: Nelson Aly Rodriguez, Head of Delegation, nelson.alyrodriguez@ifrc.org

IFRC Project Manager: Mariela Gómez, Disaster Management Coordinator, mariela.gomez@ifrc.org

IFRC focal point for the emergency: Mariela Gómez, Disaster Management Coordinator, mariela.gomez@ifrc.org

Media Contact: Susana Arroyo, Manager, Regional Communications, susana.arroyo@ifrc.org

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