



# GABON

IFRC network mid-year report, January – June 2023

15 December 2023

## IN SUPPORT OF THE GABONESE RED CROSS SOCIETY



9

National Society branches



52

National Society staff



1,500

National Society volunteers

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

in Swiss francs (CHF)

<b>Total</b>		Funding requirements		3.2M
<b>IFRC</b>	Longer-term	Funding requirements		3.2M

[Click here for more financial information](#)

## IFRC NETWORK SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

National Society	Multilateral Support		Bilateral Support			
	Climate	Migration and displacement	Values, power and inclusion	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	
British Red Cross	●					
Gabonese Red Cross Society		●				
Japanese Red Cross Society	●					

■ Supported

Appeal numbers **MAAGA002**



# OVERALL PROGRESS

## Context

Gabon is located on the west coast of Central Africa, bordered by the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and the Gulf of Guinea. It is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. More than 70 percent of the total population live in the coastal areas, which are also home to the majority of economic activities. Gabon is rich in extractive natural resources, mainly manganese, oil, and its timber and forest reserves. Abundant oil, foreign private investment, and low population density have helped make the country one of the most prosperous in sub-Saharan Africa, with the third highest GDP per capita in the region. Gabon has the highest human development indices in sub-Saharan Africa.

However, despite abundant natural resources, Gabon is dependent on imports of food and capital goods and is lacking infrastructure (transport and electricity). It is also facing high unemployment rates, endemic poverty, poor wealth distribution, and has an informal economy (estimated at between 40 percent and 50 percent of GDP).

In February 2023, an outbreak of Marburg disease in neighbouring Equatorial Guinea raised a risk for Gabon, and led the authorities to take preventative measures.

In Gabon, the rainy season generally lasts from October to end May, early June, depending on climatic variations. Torrential rains in Gabon are slanting and heavy, generally accompanied by landslides and/or violent winds throughout the rainy season. On Monday 15 May 2023, torrential rain accompanied by violent winds hit Franceville, the chief town of the Haut Ogooué Province in Gabon, causing extensive damage. The damage affected a large number of families, as well as public and private infrastructures, destroying schools, shops and electricity poles.

## Key achievements

**The Gabonese Red Cross Society** has maintained a strong identity with representatives of the state and humanitarian and development organizations. The essential services that the National Society provides to vulnerable communities include the following:

- **First aid:** The Gabonese Red Cross has continued providing training in community-based health and first aid, health topics related to health and safety in the workplace, first aid coverage at public events, life-saving support in the case of accidents, and ambulance services.
- **Disaster risk management:** In the area of disaster risk reduction, the National Society has been preparing for and responding to natural and man-made hazards impact such as windstorms and health emergencies. Notably, the National Society has accessed the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) for three [operations](#) in 2023: [Anticipatory actions for Marburg risk](#), [Violent winds](#) and [Elections preparedness](#) (launched shortly after the reporting period and to be featured in the annual report). The National Society has also played a major role in improving food security, household livelihoods, and access to decent emergency shelter.
- **Promotion of humanitarian values and human rights:** Thanks to the e-learning platform, a number of people have been trained on the principles and ideals of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, International Humanitarian Law, prevention of child trafficking and exploitation; promotion and protection of the social status of women, and prevention of gender-based violence.

# IFRC NETWORK ACTION

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



### Climate and environment

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The Gabonese Red Cross lobbied the authorities at the National School of Water and Forestry to sign a partnership agreement for tree planting. The capacity of 70 National Society volunteers was strengthened to convey messages to the community about the climate change crisis and prevention methods. Gabonese Red Cross officials participated in several regional and sub-regional meetings.

The IFRC supports the Gabonese Red Cross by sharing the seasonal and weekly weather forecasts and monthly climate watches produced for Central Africa by the Centre for Climate Application and Forecasting in Central Africa. The National Society was also supported to participate in a conference on disaster risk reduction in Malabo in March 2023. Further, National Society volunteers (Youth) were engaged for tree plantation and care (Climate action), with an aim to plant/take care of at least 100,000 trees in 2023.



### Disasters and crises

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According to information received from the Gabonese Red Cross Haut Ogooué provincial committee, torrential rains accompanied by violent winds hit the town of Franceville on Monday 15 May 2023, causing significant damage. The damage affected around 500 households, as well as infrastructure such as schools, shops and electricity poles littering the roads, with major safety risks for the population. The provincial Red Cross Committee assessed the situation with volunteers, and from every indication, 303 households, or 1,818 people, were the most vulnerable of all those affected. Since the beginning of the rainy season, torrential rains damaged several public infrastructures in Franceville and other localities of the Mpassa Division. Buildings and houses were also affected, as well as access to road networks, particularly, the railway linking Libreville to Mpassa, and the road linking these areas to the capital. The government needed to work hard to restore highway roads as accessing them was a major challenge. The most common means of access was by air. The Gabonese Red Cross accessed the IFRC DREF to support its response and more details can be found under the DREF [Violent winds](#) and [operations update](#).

The National Society embarked on the process of setting up an early warning system thanks to a partnership signed with Agence Gabonaise d'Etude et d'Observation Spatiales. It also increased collaboration with the national investigation office for aeronautical incidents. Gabonese Red Cross volunteers were trained in mapping risk areas using open-source software such as QGIS and Lotus map.

The IFRC supported the National Society to participate in the platform for the exchange of disaster management managers for Central Africa. The same applies to its participation in the platform and monthly meetings of the Cash for Work community of practitioners. IFRC actively participated in the latest Africa climate week forum in Libreville (Gabon) where serious discussions on climate and humanitarian crises were undertaken, including meeting with Nigeria's Environment Minister in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund.



## Health and wellbeing

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The Gabonese Red Cross has been participating effectively in decision-making bodies in the area of health. At both provincial and national levels, the National Society takes part in meetings of the Coordination Opérationnelle de Réponse aux Épidémies (CORÉ). The IFRC has been supporting the National Society in strengthening its auxiliary role to the public authorities, particularly the Ministry of Health, and to position itself as a key public health actor.

The IFRC has supported community engagement for vaccinations, both routine and campaigns, as well as for the COVID-19 vaccine. Assistance was also provided to 30 vulnerable households to limit the spread of malaria and combat poverty.

The Gabonese Red Cross has also remained on alert during the reporting period for potential cross-border disease outbreak. On February 10, 2023, the Government of Equatorial Guinea reported the death of nine people presenting the symptoms of hemorrhagic fever. On February 12, a sample of suspected cases was declared positive for Marburg disease and the World Health Organization (WHO) published confirmation of the epidemic in Equatorial Guinea on 13 February 2023. Cameroon recorded suspected cases since February 9, none testing positive.

In parallel to the response in Equatorial Guinea, anticipatory actions were needed in bordering countries of Gabon and Cameroon. In Gabon, and in an official press release on February 15, 2023, the Government through the Minister of Health and Social Affairs announced the existence of a high risk of spread of the disease on Gabonese territory and created an operational coordination unit for the response to the epidemic (CORE). The major risk for the spread of the disease in Gabon lies in the multiple entry points at the borders with Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. The evolution of the suspected cases across the four provinces of Equatorial Guinea required to sustain the prevention, risk communication and surveillance in Gabon which shared border with all the affected provinces through the borders of Woleu-Ntem (80% of borders with Equatorial Guinea) and Estuaire (20%). The Gabonese Red Cross, in its status as an auxiliary to the authorities in the humanitarian field, had to support the Government in the preventive measures put in place and the state of alert, and the National Society accessed the IFRC DREF for [Anticipatory actions for Marburg risk](#).

With the formal final declaration of the end of the epidemic by 8 June 2023 and no cases reported for the 21 days since that declaration, the Gabonese Red Cross completed the planned readiness activities, and will consider the capacity developed during this operation as a key value for any viral hemorrhagic fever disease outbreak. See the DREF [operation update](#) for more details



## Migration and displacement

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No activities reported during this reporting period.



## Values, power and inclusion

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The Gabonese Red Cross trained 70 volunteers on community engagement and accountability as well as on protection, gender and inclusion.

As a result of the e-learning platform, a number of people have been trained on the principles and ideals of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, on the promotion of International Humanitarian Law, prevention of child trafficking and exploitation, promotion and protection of the social status of women, and the prevention of gender-based violence.

# ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS



## Strategic and operational coordination

In line with its auxiliary role, the Gabonese Red Cross continues to maintain close coordination with a range of government ministries, departments and agencies. In particular, it works with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Environment, in the areas of disaster preparedness and response, health, climate, community involvement and responsibility, and institutional development.

The National Society also works in partnership with UN agencies, in particular with WHO in the areas of health, community involvement and responsibility, and with UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in the areas of health, climate, community involvement and responsibility, and institutional development. Other partnerships also exist: UNAIDS on health, community involvement and responsibility, and institutional development; Organisation for Coordinating the Fight Against Endemics in Central Africa (OCEAC) on disaster preparedness and response, health, climate, community involvement and responsibility, and institutional development; and the Global Fund on health and community involvement and responsibility.

The IFRC continues to support the Gabonese Red Cross in strategic and operational coordination. The National Society has updated its unified country plan for the period 2024–2025, which is aligned with the IFRC Pan-Africa key initiatives and with active engagement of participating National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. IFRC continues to ensure membership coordination (quarterly calls) with the National Society on these. It supported the National Society to organize one COSNAC (Coordination des sociétés nationales de l'Afrique centrale) meeting and one sub-regional National Society leadership level meeting in 2023.

IFRC has also provided support to the Gabonese Red Cross (consortium lead National Society) for successful implementation of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention - Saving Lives and Livelihoods programme. Resource mobilization plans/joint proposals were developed for crisis response. There was also effective coordination for IFRC DREF with improved key performance indicators. Similarly, support was provided for readiness to respond/Red Ready including flood season readiness, response teams, peer-to-peer support.



## National Society development

Volunteers were trained on mapping risk areas using open-source software such as QGIS and Lotus map.

The IFRC has been supporting the National Society through -

Governance:

- Provided technical support to the National Society to meet their statutory requirements and conditions
- Provided technical support to the National Society regarding planning and participation in the upcoming Red Cross Red Crescent Pan-African Conference
- Supported the National Society for their smooth annual general meetings and updating their critical policies

Leadership and management:

- Organized one sub-regional event for the National Society leadership peer-to-peer learning and sharing
- Strengthened the COSNAC for peer-to-peer support at governance, management and technical levels



## Humanitarian diplomacy

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IFRC, in its humanitarian diplomatic plan to meet with key partners and ambassadors, visited the following institutions between January and June 2023: Commissioner of the Economic Community of Central African States, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Gabon, Minister for Health and Social Affairs of Gabon, Ambassadors of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Japan in Gabon, and the UN Resident Coordinator.



## Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

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- The Gabonese Red Cross continues its commitment to integrating risk management at National Society level through the appointment of a National Society risk focal point, the development of a risk register, and the use of the risk register to guide decisions within National Societies.
- The Gabonese Red Cross trained its management, staff and volunteers in risk management, ensured that all programmes/projects and operations have a risk focal point, developed a risk register to be used in the programme/project and operations management process.

The IFRC has been working closely with the National Society as well as internally to implement planned activities in relation to accountability:

Trust:

- Increased trust, as a member National Society, in its International Federation through transparent and regular communication, informal updates, strategic coordination, calls, and periodical updates and reports
- Risk management in IFRC's Yaoundé country cluster delegation as well as the National Society
- Zero-tolerance for fraud and corruption
- Increased number of volunteers and staff of National Society trained on key policies for accountability
- 100 percent compliance with mandatory training/courses at the IFRC country cluster delegation level

Agility and accountability:

- Diversified budget holders in the country cluster delegation
- Reporting compliance - reduce overdue reports
- Simplify procedures in the country cluster delegation and increase agility in administration, logistics, finance, human resources and deployments/travel

Safeguarding:

- Maximum effort on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse – training in the National Society on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
- Increased understanding of safeguarding policies in IFRC country cluster delegation and the National Society
- Organize in-depth onboarding process and follow-ups for new staff
- Support the annual “Climate, values and trust” internal survey
- Continue to enhance one effective team spirit (organize formal and informal events for enhancing positive team dynamics)



**The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 15 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

### DATA SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

- **Timeframe and alignment:** The reporting timeframe for this overview is covering the period from 1 January to 30 June 2023. However, due to the diversity of the IFRC and differences in fiscal years, this coverage may not fully align for some National Societies. Mid-year reporting data may have been based on estimations, with plans to submit more robust numbers at the annual reporting stage.
- **Missing data and breakdowns:** National Societies have diverse data collection systems and processes that may not align with the standardized indicators. Data may not be available for some indicators, for some National Societies. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under or over-estimation of the efforts led by all.
- **Reporting bias:** The data informing this Federation-wide overview is self-reported by each National Society (or its designated support entity) and which is the owner and gatekeeper, and responsible for accuracy and updating. IFRC tries to triangulate the data provided by the National Societies with previous data and other data in the public domain.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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