

Emergency appeal №: MDRSY009 Emergency appeal launched: 07/02/2023. Operational Strategy published: 20/04/2023	Glide №: EQ-2023-000015-SYR
Operations update: 9-months update Date of issue: 20/12/2023	Timeframe covered by this update: From 06/02/2023 to 31/10/2023
Operation timeframe: 24 months (06/02/2023- 28/02/2025)	Number of people being assisted: 2.5 million people
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 100 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 200 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 2 million



SARC Volunteers providing First Aid services after the earthquake. Source: SARC

To date, this Emergency Appeal, which seeks **CHF 100,000,000 (IFRC Secretariat funding requirements)**, is **59 percent funded**. This includes hard and soft pledges. Additional funding is needed to enable the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, through the IFRC, to continue addressing people's immediate needs affected by the earthquake. See the [donor response list here](#).

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

The devastating earthquakes that struck Syria and Turkey on February 6, 2023, had severe consequences for an already vulnerable population. Before the seismic events, more than four million people in northwest Syria, and 15.3 million people across Syria, were already in need of humanitarian aid, reflecting the severe protracted crisis affecting the population. After 12 years of conflict, nearly 9.5 million Syrians (44% of the population) were severely food insecure. (HNO 2023)

The earthquakes, measuring magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.5, caused severe damage in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, and Idlib governorates. Major infrastructure damage was observed in cities and rural areas across these regions. According to reports from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), the earthquake resulted in the tragic loss of 5,670 lives, with 11,774 individuals sustaining injuries. SARC estimated that over 8 million people have been directly affected by the event. The earthquake strained an already fragile infrastructure including water and sanitation plants and distribution networks, schools and healthcare systems. Hospitals struggled to provide adequate care due to electricity shortages, lack of medication, and adverse weather conditions. The acute watery diarrhea/cholera outbreak added to the burden and posed new risks, with collective centers prone to disease outbreaks.

During the reporting period, the situation was further exacerbated by high inflation and a decline in the value of the Syrian pound which has been devalued four times in 2023 and lost 53% of its value in one year. At the end of the third quarter of 2023, the national average price of a WFP standard reference food basket for a family of five reached SYP 928,587, in October 2023, 162 percent compared to a year earlier, and quadrupled within a two-year timeframe. Beyond the slide in the Syrian pound, cuts in fuel subsidies in recent months provided further inflationary pressures (WFP Syria Country Office, Market price watch bulletin, September 2023 issue 105).

The national average Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) for a household of five members reached SYP 2,277,793 in October 2023, marking a fourteenth consecutive monthly increase. The cost of living nearly doubled in the first ten months of 2023 and increased fourfold in two years (WFP, October 2023). At the same time, the increase in salaries has not kept pace with the inflation across all sectors and the purchasing power of an average monthly income has decreased significantly. The minimum wage constituted only eight percent of the MEB in October.

In June and July 2023, Homs, Hama, Latakia, and Tartous areas, all affected by the earthquake, also witnessed large wildfires, the intensity and size of which in some areas led to the creation of their weather systems, generating pyrocumulonimbus clouds, trapping heat, and generating strong wind, in turn sparking further fires. These fires led to material and environmental damages, as homes and crops were burnt destroying the main source of livelihood of the population in the affected area. Additionally, a large part of the vegetation, forests, and natural reserves were also blazed. Upon the request from SARC, 500,000 CHF was allocated from the IFRC DREF in August to respond to the wildfires.

A water crisis has been building up in As-Sweida governorate over the last year. The main impact is a significant decrease in rainfall and snowfall which is one of the main sources for dam water collection. Lack of maintenance of water systems and spare parts led to a large number of wells being out of service (around 80%). Moreover, the excessive drilling of wells near the main water resource, uncontrolled land irrigation and illegal extraction exacerbated

the water crisis in the district and resulted in a major, severe, or critical problem to meet water needs. In August, IFRC allocated 800,000 CHF from the DREF to address the acute maintenance and repair needs.

In September, around 7,000 families were displaced in Deir-ez-Zor from the east of the Euphrates River to the western areas under the control of the Syrian Government due to clashes between Syrian Democratic Forces and Tribes. SARC responded by delivering assistance to the displaced in several sectors including relief, shelter, first aid and healthcare, WASH, protection and legal services, both in collective centers and among host communities. SARC continues to deliver humanitarian assistance to some 5,000 families that remain displaced.

In October, the situation was rendered more tense in the Middle East region with the outburst of the conflict in Gaza. While the situation was extremely unpredictable in the first weeks of the conflict, the spill over into Syria has been mostly localized by the time of this update. Targeted strikes on the international airports in Damascus and Aleppo have disrupted cargo and passenger traffic and halted UN Humanitarian Air Service routes. Sporadic strikes in the South of the country and the Golan Heights by the Israeli Defence Forces continued. In addition, an increased number of strikes and different aggressive actions took place in various parts of the country including the Northeast, Northwest and Syrian desert.

The risk of spill over of the Gaza conflict into neighbouring countries saw the IFRC launch an Emergency Appeal to support the neighboring National Societies (Egyptian Red Crescent, Lebanese Red Cross, Jordanian Red Crescent and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent) in preparing and strengthening their response readiness to the potential escalation of hostilities in the region and subsequent humanitarian needs. According to the WFP, the regional uncertainty is likely to continue to destabilize the prices of basic commodities and services which are expected to continue to rise worsening the availability and access to the most vulnerable people.

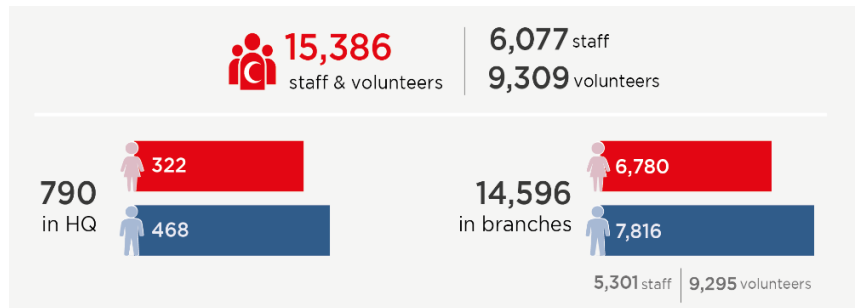
All these back-to-back and relentless shocks make the context extremely challenging and rife with unpredictability. Resources are stretched and/or depleted, and the population in both earthquake-affected areas and the rest of the country is facing massive challenges at the economic, social, security, and coping levels. This also means that the emergency response continues to centre on the provision of humanitarian assistance even 9 months after the earthquake. Early recovery and recovery interventions have increased during the last months of the reporting period but can only be scaled up with lifesaving services running in parallel. As the winter period is approaching pre-crisis needs and challenges the Syrian population faces are compounding. With sub-zero temperatures expected in higher altitudes in the coming months, access to shelter, electricity, heating, food and water will become even more critical.

Compounding an already very challenging situation, during the reporting period several of SARC's partners announced significant funding cuts for 2023/2024. As the largest humanitarian organisation in Syria, providing front-line assistance to vulnerable communities this has momentous challenges for SARC both in terms of addressing needs and also in its relationships and engagement with communities and families which will directly face these cuts. Despite the challenges outlined, SARC has been and continues to be at the forefront of addressing the urgent needs of the populations affected by the earthquake and several new and deteriorating pre-existing crises with funding from its partners.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal of CHF 200 million that aims to reach 2.5 million affected people. The Emergency Appeal is part of a Federation-Wide approach, based on the response priorities of SARC and in consultation with all Federation members contributing to it, integrating holistic planning within the operational strategy, taking into consideration the programmatic sectorial experiences of in-country Partner National Societies with SARC, and assigning lead coordination positioning.



The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) has a strong capacity for emergency response and relief, emergency medical services, healthcare services, Water and Sanitation (WASH), food security, livelihoods, protection, community services, media and communication, logistics, coordination, and information management, with a strong focus also on national society strengthening and corporate services. SARC's dedication to humanitarian principles and its ability to adapt and deliver services in challenging contexts are commendable.

The National Society's Headquarters is in Damascus, and it has a network of 14 branches across all the governorates of Syria and 74 active sub-branches with a total of 15,386 active volunteers and staff. As a humanitarian auxiliary to the public authorities, SARC is Syria's national coordinator for humanitarian aid as mandated by the Government of Syria. SARC provides life-saving assistance to meet humanitarian needs in the areas of relief, emergency response, shelter services, emergency medical services/first aid, primary health care, clinic/hospital services, psychosocial and mental health support, water and rehabilitation, sanitation, and hygiene promotion, protection, livelihoods and food security which aims at early recovery, guided by its Strategic Plan (2023-2027).

Reporting on SARC's earthquake response plan, **up to October 31, SARC has provided 17.9 million humanitarian services** with financial and in-kind contributions from its partners, where a single beneficiary may have received more than one service depending on specific needs. The cumulative services and numbers presented in the infographic below reflect SARC's multi-sectoral response strategy and achievements reached with financial, in-kind and technical support from partners since the onset of the emergency. This includes support from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, States, UN agencies, humanitarian actors, the private sector, public, national institutions, and organisations.



Syria Earthquake: Syrian Arab Red Crescent Response

From 6th Feb 2023 to 31st Oct 2023

7.8 Magnitude

Situation:

8M people affected

5 governorates affected

11,774 people injured

5,670 people killed

123,226 buildings destroyed or damaged.

1 SARC facility destroyed.

9 SARC facilities damaged.

Key figures of the response activities:

2.5 millions targeted people

12.9M services provided by the disaster management team

5.7K cases responded to by the emergency medical services team.

4M medical services provided by health department

15K families received cash assistance.

More than **5K** logistic services provided. 21 warehouses, used for the response. 5,023 logistic missions.

17.9 millions provided service
where the beneficiary may receive more than one service depending on the situation.

336K services provided by the water and rehabilitation team

403.7K services provided by the protection & community services team.

75K legal services provided by the legal services team.

127 implemented training.

SARC received humanitarian aid support through **322** planes from various components of the international community.

The exact number of beneficiaries cannot be counted accurately during the response.

How we response:

The Initial Response:

The SARC teams intervened from the **first moments of the disaster** and participated in evacuations and ambulance operations, preparing shelters, in addition to evaluating the infrastructures, buildings and shelters.

The first priority was initially to provide life-saving assistance.

All operational teams have been mobilized from all departments within the sectors concerned in the response, which have provided their various services, and are still developing their long-term plans to continue providing appropriate services according to the stages of the response.

The Integrated and Participatory Response:

In order to implement a comprehensive and integrated response, and to ensure optimal coordination between SARC programs, a **multi-sectoral assessment** is implemented in order to target beneficiaries and provide various services in an effective and coordinated manner.

The process of **revising the earthquake plan** has commenced with a kickoff workshop aimed at drawing lessons from our initial response efforts. This will be followed by activities focused on revising and collecting data, ultimately resulting in an updated plan that addresses the ever-changing requirements.

In order to improve the quality of services provided, current services are **monitored and evaluated**, where **234,558 satisfaction and feedback surveys** were collected for services provided within clinics and after community awareness sessions, and **128 monitoring checklists** were implemented to monitor the work carried out by the Water and Rehabilitation Team, in addition to other assessments tools.

Protection and Inclusion:

Based on the principle of protection and inclusion, projects are being implemented to facilitate the access of people with special needs to various services, where **ramps** have been built for **people with disabilities** in health centers and shelters in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama and Homs.

Community Engagement and Accountability:

As part of SARC CEA's approach, we actively engage the community during the response by adopting a **participatory approach**. This involves listening to their needs and using this valuable information to guide and adapt our response activities.

Standardized community **feedback channels** were adopted to collect complaints, questions and requests in the affected governorates related to response interventions.

In order to enhance the role of volunteers and its importance in **communicating with the community effectively and reliably**, briefing sessions were provided to **579** volunteers about the activities provided by the programs within the organization based on the Welcome to SARC guidance, and briefing sessions on the Code of Conduct.

In addition to trained **89** volunteers about the CEA procedures, and feedback channels.

Capacity Building:

To bolster the expertise of SARC volunteers in disaster management, recovery, emergency preparedness, and community engagement, a range of training sessions on various subjects are organized, where **127** training were implemented for **4,041** participants. Amongst these training:

- Risk reduction measures and community awareness of the risks of the earthquake sessions for 1,241 participants, in addition to training 64 volunteers about advanced disaster management.
- Psychological first aid & psychosocial support training for 913 participants.
- 40 volunteers were receive training about restoring family links, and 20 of them were also trained in body management topics.
- First aid training for 416 volunteers and 416 people from the local community.
- 80 volunteers from the cash and voucher assistance team received training about market analysis and conduct PDM.
- Trained 39 volunteers to be prepared as peer support facilitators.

SARC-HQ



Syria Earthquake: Syrian Arab Red Crescent Response

From 6th Feb 2023 to 31st Oct 2023

7.8 Magnitude

During the earthquake response, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent mobilized all operational teams from all departments within the sectors concerned in the response, and the following services were provided:

Disaster Management Services:

- Evacuating families from their cracked homes toward shelters.
- Organizing the movement of **4,338 families** (21,690 people) from their places of residence to other places (1,041 families in Homs, 1,184 families in Tartous (172 families of them internally displaced), 1,568 families in Rural Damascus, 124 families in As-sweida, 187 families in Idlib, 51 families in Qunietra, 29 families in Damascus, and 154 families in Dar'a).
- Received **71 cases** for facilitated **restoring family links** by the body management and restoring family links team, **44** of them closed successfully, and the others are still in the process.
- More than 200 shelters have been served by SARC teams since the beginning of the response, and currently, **28** shelters hosting **4,696** people, are designated for response by the SARC, as services are being provided to them.
- Deliver a convoy with relief and medical items to Sheikh Maqsoud in Aleppo consisting of **31** trucks, and a convoy with relief items to Fafien neighborhood in Aleppo consisting of **12** trucks.
- 7,167,219** distributed items (including convoys' items).

Non-Food Items & shelters: 998,123 items	WASH: 2,223,835 items
Food & Agriculture: 3,144,534 items	Nutrition: 800,727 items

Protection and Community Services: **403,711** beneficiaries

Protection and Community Services provided different services, as follows:

- Provide awareness sessions and distribute posters for **206,382** beneficiaries about safety and security measures in earthquakes, panic, dealing with children, grief & loss, and sessions about sex and gender-based violence, and others, in addition, to distribute in-kind assistance for **160** beneficiaries to running **189** focus group discussion sessions.
- Provide psychological first aid services for **34,157** beneficiaries especially for **children**, in addition to providing services in shelters such as recreational activities for **35,894** kids.
- Case management services and referral to medical, legal, and mental health services for all age groups to **14,387** beneficiaries.
- In addition to **90,898** structured activities for all ages, **21,537** education services, and **107** peer support activities.

Emergency Medical Services:

5,756 beneficiaries

5,756 cases responded to by the EMS team, as follows:

254
bodies transferred

3,109
injuries transferred

2,393
cases treated at the place

Water and Rehabilitation:

- Implement rapid assessment for water & sanitation infrastructure, and electricity networks across all affected governorates, **310** houses were also assessed, in addition to assessment for **32** SARC facilities, and an assessment of damages of **55** central water tanks, in addition, to implementing a need assessment of the SARC Children's Hospital, and assessed Al-Razi Hospital in Aleppo.
- Assessment of **215** shelters including **schools**, and **43** shelters rehabilitation, in addition to provide **46** shelter kit services, including maintenance of windows, doors, water tanks, electrical panels, and cables, with all the necessary supplies for installation.
- Installing **48** water tanks with different capacities, providing **46** metal barrels and **6** water pumps in addition to **29** water heaters, and supplying (**15,025 m³**) of water through cisterns.
- Distribute **119,304** water bottles and **11,472** jerry-cans and **246** bread portions in shelters, in addition to distributing **39,066** hygiene kits and **165,221** other items.
- Following up and supervising the rubble removal work resulting from the earthquakes and demolishing cracked buildings, in cooperation with the Aleppo City Council and the ICRC.
- Provide **5** electricity generating sets for bakeries in Lattakia, in addition to **14** electricity generators, **29** battery (200A), **41** solar light (100W), and **14** electrical transformers in Aleppo, and Hama, in addition to maintenance of **two collective kitchens**, and follow-up of the rehabilitation work of **4** bakeries, and an electricity generator was also provided to a bakery in Aleppo.
- Installation of **2** electrical transformers for the shelters in Idlib, providing **6** batteries, **10** electric chargers with different capacities, and **4** solar lights, in addition to installing **17** water taps and **4** showers within the shelters in Idlib.
- Rehabilitation of one of the SARC clinics in Aleppo.
- The health awareness promotion team provided awareness sessions about several topics including cholera and its prevention, in addition to the promotion of hygiene behaviors.

SARC-HQ



Syria Earthquake: Syrian Arab Red Crescent Response

From 6th Feb 2023 to 31st Oct 2023

7.8 Magnitude

Medical Services: 2,847,335 beneficiaries

The total medical services reached **3,874,674** services, as follows:

Program	Beneficiaries	Services	
Mobile Health Units	258,130	516,260 consultations and medicines	
Community-Based Health and First Aid	1,970,056 <small>beneficiaries from awareness sessions including 9,391 awareness messages.</small>	2,023,361 including distributing 53,083 items, and 10,321 referrals.	
Physical Rehabilitation Program	89,810	including 981 mobility aids, distributing 23,225 hygiene items.	
Mental Health	5,663	including psychological support sessions for 460 volunteers.	
Medical Mobile Team	123,181	221,426	
Clinics	370,763	784,854	
Nutrition	17,962	22,885 including distributing food supplements and vitamins	
Maternal, Newborn and Child Health	11,770	24,602 including the following services:	
1,120 hospitalizations	4 intensive care unit.	704 normal deliveries	743 emergency surgical operations.
3,169 emergency cases	424 incubator care.	288 cesarean sections.	
9,075 diagnostic services (lab test, Echo, X-Ray, medicine, bandages, and others).			

Legal Services: 73,412 beneficiaries

The provided legal services includes:

- 41,612 beneficiaries from legal needs assessments.
- 11,536 beneficiaries from legal visits and monitoring.
- 8,025 beneficiaries from legal consultations.
- 25 beneficiaries from interventions before courts.
- 11,080 beneficiaries from legal awareness sessions.
- 300 beneficiaries from legal communication & cooperation services.
- 834 beneficiaries from interventions before administrative bodies.

Cash and Voucher Assistance: 15,654 benefited families

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Cash and Voucher Assistance Unit has worked to respond through coordination with the various units. where in coordination with the operations department, a quick registration form was developed, that includes basic information to register potential beneficiaries in each of the directly and indirectly affected governorates. The plan included intervention on several levels:

The first level: Provision of Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA). By using a scoring matrix based on the vulnerability criteria described in the Syrian Arab Red Crescent's operational plan.

The second level: is intervention in the field of shelter and the early recovery phase through coordination with the Livelihoods Unit and the Water and Rehabilitation Unit.

The work is carried out in cooperation and coordination with the operating rooms approved by the government in order to ensure coordination of work between organizations working on the ground to reach the most vulnerable families and avoid repetition among the beneficiaries. Cash assistance was distributed in Hama, Aleppo, Lattakia, and Idlib to **15,654** families, worth **3,150,000** per family.

Livelihood:

With a **participatory approach**, livelihood needs assessment has been conducted in Aleppo, Hama, and Lattakia for the affected people from EQ for different Livelihood groups and different wealthy groups.

The assessment included interviews with Key Informants Interview, Focus Group Discussions, and Household levels, to understand and analyse the impact of the disaster on livelihood assets, coping strategies, market functioning, and seasonal factors. The relevant intervention has been identified by supporting small business owners to protect and restart their Livelihood.

The project was published, applicants' applications were received, and the initial list of potential beneficiaries was prepared. Currently Entrepreneurship trainings are being conducted, and at the same time, the livelihood needs assessment is still ongoing for different affected areas to determine interventions according to the needs.

SARC-HQ

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation:

Currently, ten Partner National Societies are supporting SARC through multi-year programming bilaterally (and many also multilaterally), including the American, Austrian, British, Canadian, Danish, French, German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Swiss Red Cross Societies, eight of which have in-country presence. Many more National Societies have contributed multilaterally through the IFRC Emergency Appeal to SARC's response including the Netherlands Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Korean Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, and the American Red Cross. ICRC has made significant contributions to the response both in terms of funding and relief material. States, private sector, and institutions have also joined the response and relief efforts. Partners continue to avail technical expertise and in-kind relief items to SARC and the membership based on requests.

On 17 February 2023, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) was allocated CHF 282,339 from DREF to support the Palestinian refugees in the earthquake-affected areas of Lattakia, Aleppo, and Hama for six months. In the initial phase supported by this DREF, a total of 2,500 people will receive support to cope with the effects of the earthquake through the provision of shelter, food, non-food items, and assistance. To view the DREF operational strategy, click [here](#).

Needs analysis.

SARC's initial assessment and analysis identified five governorates that were directly affected by the disaster: Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, Idleb, and Tartous. The following section outlines the key needs to be addressed in this operation based on completed assessments and a review of secondary data.

Throughout the reporting period, SARC continued to undertake sectoral assessments in the affected areas. Assessments supported the prioritization of SARC's interventions and light rehabilitation works. All health facilities (static and mobile) operating in the most affected governorates continued to monitor disease trends and report to the Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS) Epidemiological mechanism. Assessments were undertaken not only in the directly affected governorates but also among the households and host communities displaced in other governorates across Syria such as rural Damascus and Homs.

SARC validated data on vulnerabilities, capacities and needs collected during previous emergency response operations in the earthquake-affected areas. This data informed planning for the next phase of the response, including geographical targeting for community risk reduction and preparedness interventions. See section 'Risk Reduction, climate adaptation, and Recovery' below.

Shelter, housing, and settlement¹: Housing damages across the urban and rural areas of the six governorates are estimated at US\$880.6 million, with some 87,330 housing units, representing 4.8 percent of the total housing stock, considered to have been partially damaged or destroyed. Losses (comprised of loss of rental income, housing expenditures of families with destroyed houses, loss of housing assets, and loss of income to governments) are estimated at US\$69.2 million across the six governorates. Aleppo and Idlib Governorates incurred 92 percent of estimated damage costs and 90 percent of estimated losses. About 21% of units damaged are from the informal sector, occupied by vulnerable lower-middle-income families. This shift in priorities emphasizes the amplified humanitarian crisis resulting from the earthquake, which requires an agile and large-scale emergency response.

Most of the short-term collective shelters set-up after the earthquakes have been closed and families are provided with two options to either be relocated to medium/long-term designated shelters or to receive CVA amounting to 7.8 million SYP per family. Approximately 18 families in Homs and 466 families in Aleppo were accommodated in collective shelters at the end of the reporting period. Initiatives with alternative housing through cash-for-rent assistance are being explored by humanitarian partners in coordination with the operations rooms. Households that are returning to their homes or taking alternative shelter solutions, will continue to need in-kind relief items such as kitchen-set, water tanks, winterization items (mattresses, blankets, insulation mats), solar-powered lamps etc. This accounts also for hosting families. To date, much of the aid has been provided to families taking shelter in collective or reception centres, resulting in less support being provided to families in hosting arrangements or in existing IDP sites². Many organizations wind down the earthquake response, putting high pressure on SARC to continue the provision of shelter-related assistance.

Livelihoods and basic needs³: The earthquake-induced loss of livelihoods and the rise in food insecurity have intensified the struggle of the impacted population, rendering the process of rebuilding their lives even more challenging. The reference food basket for October 2023⁴ doubled since the start of 2023, surged by 162 percent compared to a year earlier, and quadrupled within a two-year timeframe. The relatively weaker Syrian pound and recent reductions in fuel subsidies have exerted inflationary pressures on the cost, posing fundamental risks to food security. It is therefore essential to address these emergent needs - livelihood restoration, access to clean water and food - while also addressing the pre-existing vulnerabilities such as poverty, lack of access to healthcare, inadequate

¹ [World Bank Rapid Needs Assessment Report \(RNDA, 2023\)](#)

² Global Shelter Cluster, Syria.

³ [World Bank Rapid Needs Assessment Report \(RNDA, 2023\)](#)

⁴ Market Price Watch Bulletin October 2023 ISSUE 106

education, in the absence of much needed safety nets. Based on the report by FAO⁵ About half of the key informants (49 percent) reported that access to food deteriorated in their communities since the earthquake. The main issues that people reported to be facing with access to food were mostly related to increases in food prices (reported by 93 percent of key informants) and decreases in income or finances (76 percent). Other key issues reported were related to hosting additional people since the earthquake (49 percent), decreases in aid or assistance (48 percent), and decreases in food supply in markets or shops (36 percent).

Health and Care⁶: 3.9% of health facilities in the affected areas were either damaged (3.5 percent of facilities) or destroyed (0.4 percent of facilities), with estimated damages of US\$202.9 million. Health facilities in impacted areas were unable to accommodate the surge in patients and had to refer them elsewhere. Shortages of specialized care facilities, equipment, basic medical consumables, and health professionals all impaired the ability of health facilities to provide care. With the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria, the lack of access to basic health care and medication for all Syrians, earthquake and non-earthquake affected will continue. Food insecurity and nutrition remain challenges in the coming months and the approaching winter will put additional stress on the health and well-being of households and in particular the persons with non-communicable disorders, the elderly, children and bed-ridden. The prevalence of persons with disabilities has increased, with some of which will be dependent on specialized care in the years to come.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)⁷: Damages are estimated at US\$129.7 million across the nine cities and US\$145.4 million across the six assessed Governorates. The water-related infrastructure assessed includes wells, water towers/tanks, water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants, pumping stations, storage reservoirs of approximately 10,000 liters, and water and sanitation facilities. The water sector section of the RDNA excludes underground infrastructure (water supply networks; sewerage networks), and house-level water infrastructure (household connections). It further excludes damage to the Afrin and other dams, which are expected to account for most damages. A large number of water supply and sanitation systems remain unrepaired in the earthquake-affected areas resulting in expensive alternatives for accessing water such as water trucking. The hygiene and sanitation needs among the displaced and host communities persisted 9-months after the earthquake and few families could afford procuring the items required for personal and household hygiene and sanitation. Considering the drastic increase in the prices of hygiene items following the earthquake- prices have doubled-, coupled with stagnant wages, have made hygiene and sanitation articles out of reach for the most vulnerable. Beyond the role in disease prevention and promotion of personal and household hygiene, these items also contribute to preserving human dignity.

Protection: According to Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) thematic report⁸ which assessed the increased protection risks and vulnerabilities after the earthquakes, highlighted the following.

- The earthquake has resulted in a significant number of unintentional family separations, primarily due to loss of lives and displacement. Family reunification processes have been difficult, further exacerbated by the loss of civil documentation.
- Coping strategies such as child labor, forced and early marriages, and substance abuse are being employed by some individuals, posing risks of exploitation and abuse.
- Mental health and psychosocial support needs are exceptionally high among a population already exposed to significant levels of conflict-related trauma.

⁵ FAO. 2023. [Syrian Arab Republic – Post-earthquake rapid needs assessment on agricultural livelihoods and production in the northwest – Data in Emergencies Impact report](#), April 2023. Rome.

⁶ [World Bank Rapid Needs Assessment Report \(RNDA, 2023\)](#)

⁷ [World Bank Rapid Needs Assessment Report \(RNDA, 2023\)](#)

⁸ [ACAPS Thematic report: Syria - Assessing increased protection risks and vulnerabilities after the earthquakes \(16 June 2023\)](#)



A truck being loaded with distribution items in Damascus – Masar warehouse. Source: SARC.

Operational risk assessment

While safety and security risks have not significantly changed in affected areas since the earthquake took place, the economic situation has seen considerable deterioration. Currency devaluation and hyperinflation affected market prices and the purchasing power of households across the country⁹. This is expected to put pressure on affected people to recover from the impact of the earthquake but also places a burden on a population reeling from over 12 years of conflict. The demand for essential needs is expected to rise, placing the population in a continued state of survival rather than transitioning into the recovery phase of the emergency. The lack of fuel, power, and other essential necessities complicates the working environment for the delivery of aid but also stretches the resources of the host community for the displaced population. Recurrent emergencies are also complicating the context further and stretching the capacities of humanitarian organizations and their staff.

IFRC has established a risk register and is now implementing the risk mitigation plans for the identified risks in close cooperation with SARC and the programme teams. IFRC is embedding risk culture in the earthquake response and annual programming working hand in hand with SARC to build its capacity in risk management. A Risk Management Delegate for Syria was recruited in August 2023 supporting in setting up risk management system and processes for

⁹ [2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic](#)

IFRC and SARC. The recruitment of a risk coordinator within SARC is ongoing. These efforts will in the long run support the effectiveness and timely response by driving efficiency by putting in control measures and follow-up mechanisms.

The ongoing conflict in Israel/Gaza has made the security context volatile in the region with spill over into Lebanon in particular. Due to this emerging conflict contingency plans have been activated to safeguard the safety of staff and ensure programme business continuity. The Risk Management and Security staff are working closely together on the monitoring and assessment of the situation and coordination between the Movement partners is taking place regularly.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy

The Operational Updates are presented in alignment with the [Operational Strategy](#) for the Syria Earthquake Operation which outlines the approach to deliver a comprehensive earthquake response to address immediate life-saving and dignity-preserving activities and outlines the mid-to-long-term needs of the affected population to become more resilient, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable communities, including host communities. A participatory reassessment of indicators occurred, engaging sector leads to ensure coherence between the identified indicators and respective activities within the sectors. The indicators reported in this 9-month operations update have been adjusted based on the outcomes of this review process.

During the implementation period, SARC reviewed and updated its Response Strategy. In June approximately 130 staff and volunteers from headquarters and branches (Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Hama, and Idleb) gathered in Damascus to discuss the revision of the Earthquake response plan and medium to long-term recovery and resilience-strengthening interventions. All relevant stakeholders including technical sector leads, support services, and crosscutting areas from SARC headquarters and branches, IFRC, ICRC and Partner National Societies contributed and participated in the workshop. The workshop focused on the main learnings based on the ongoing response and recommendations to improve systems and processes. This exchange of experience and knowledge among the participants played a pivotal role in refining the plan and making it more responsive to the evolving challenges posed by the earthquake. It ultimately provided an opportunity for all technical sectors to harmonize, coordinate and plan the core community-based interventions for the next two years and define those interventions that should be the foundations to help communities recover from the earthquake and build resilience. PNSs and IFRC co-facilitated the workshop with a team of technical experts from the MENA Regional Delegation in Beirut including in health, climate change and resilience, disaster risk reduction, operations management and relief.

During the period under review, the IFRC MENA Regional Office convened a consultative meeting in hybrid format with SARC and key Movement members (Syria-based PNSs, regional PNSs, ICRC, some MENA NSs). The broad objective was to discuss critical resilience-strengthening interventions and existing challenges, as well as the way forward for creating an enabling environment for mid to long-term resilience-strengthening efforts to flourish and people to get back on their feet.

Finally, SARC organized a planning workshop for the fiscal year 2024, convening coordinators from all branches. The workshop centred on the newly established SARC Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Presently, the operational plan is in the finalization stages and will incorporate the earthquake response.

IFRC RESPONSE Earthquake | Syria



This infographic demonstrates the added value that the IFRC has brought to complement the response to the emergency operation by SARC.



Shelter
8,294 households reached



Livelihoods & Basic Needs
17,453 households reached with food parcels
448 households reached through the livelihoods program



CASH
5,942 households reached
1,839,033 CHF disbursed



WASH
161,412 people reached with dignity kits and hygiene kits



Health & Care
781,806 people reached



Protection, Gender, and Inclusion
403,711 persons reached through SARC community centres with protection service

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION



Shelter, Housing and Settlements

Objective:		1. Emergency phase: Communities in crisis-affected areas restore and strengthen their safety through emergency shelter and household items provision.		
		2. Resilience building: Meet the medium-term shelter needs and urban resilience in line with principles of dignity, protection, and an integrated approach.		
Key indicators:	Indicator	SARC actual¹⁰	IFRC actual¹¹	IFRC target
	<i>Number of households provided with household items that support the restoration and maintenance of health, dignity and safety and the undertaking of daily domestic activities in and around the home</i>	2,573,298	8,294	31,950 ¹²

Since the immediate hours and days after the earthquake until the end of the reporting period, SARC's Disaster Management (DM) teams in the branches distributed 7,167,219 food and non-food items in collective centers and to host communities consisting of food parcels, canned food, kits for persons with special needs, dignity kits, clothes, hygiene kits, blankets, mattresses, solar lamps, jerry cans etc. as well as supplies for collective kitchens and various other required for the response. The DM teams also coordinated distributions of relief items by other SARC sectoral teams. A convoy of 24 trucks carrying relief and medical supplies was dispatched at the end of April to Sheikh Maqsoud in Aleppo. A convoy with materials enough to 2,000 families also reached Fafien around the same time. SARC was the first organization to gain access to the areas following the earthquake, ensuring that the distinctive needs of the communities were met with care and inclusiveness.

SARC teams supported the light rehabilitation and repairs of 43 collective centers including maintenance of windows, doors, water tanks, electrical panels and cables in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. 200 collective shelters have been served by SARC since the commencement of the response and at the end of the reporting period SARC continued to support 28 shelters.

The DM beneficiary database was updated with factors such as geographical vulnerability and needs mapping, capacities of host communities etc. mainly in the governorates affected by the earthquake. This updated database

¹⁰ This is the achievement of SARC through funding support from the Movement, and other partners.

¹¹ This is the achievement through IFRC-supported funding.

¹² Includes households to be reached with tents, tarps, kitchen sets and jerry cans.

facilitated the identification and targeting of persons most in need of additional assistance thereby ensuring effective use of limited resources.

IFRC support to SARC: In response to the earthquake in Syria, the IFRC supported SARC to take significant steps to support the affected population. The distribution of 1,000 kitchen sets and 2,000 jerrycans, both items reaching (2,000 households) 7,794 people in Tartous, signifies a targeted approach to provide essential tools for food preparation and contribute to the overall well-being of the affected individuals.

The IFRC also supported SARC with emergency shelter items received in-kind from the European Humanitarian Response Capacity mechanism. On February 26, 2023, a plane cargo of relief items comprised of tents, stoves, tunnel tents, ropes, and tarpaulins from ECHO arrived in Syria for the response to the earthquake. This was the first plane with relief items to land directly from the EU in Damascus since the start of the crises in 2012. The in-kind emergency shelter relief items were distributed to earthquake-affected and vulnerable households in Aleppo, Lattakia and Ar-Raqqa. Shelter specialists were deployed in the first months of the response through the IFRC global human resource surge mechanism to assess, analyze, and recommend suitable shelter solutions for midterm stays of displaced people. Feasibility assessments and design of pre-fabricated shelters started during the reporting period. Overall, the implementation of shelter solutions was not without its challenges due to initial lack of national strategy for medium and long-term shelter solutions for the affected populations.



Distribution in Lattakia. Source: SARC



Livelihoods

Objective:	<i>Communities in crisis-affected areas and the displaced can cover their immediate food needs and protect and build resilient livelihoods.</i>			
Key indicators:	Indicator	SARC actual	IFRC actual	IFRC target
	<i>Number of targeted households reached with food (in-kind)</i>	1,578,104	17,453	126,110
	<i>Number of households with damaged basic livelihood physical asset in targeted communities restored</i>	1,584	448	3,015

In the wake of the earthquake, communities often face immediate challenges such as displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of regular food supply chains. Food parcels become crucial as they provide immediate relief, offering sustenance to those who may have lost their homes and access to regular sources of nutrition. Food prices increased with more than 80% since the earthquake and doubled since the start of 2023, putting additional stress on an already vulnerable population to secure the minimum food needs of the families¹³. During the period under review, SARC demonstrated its commitment to humanitarian aid by distributing a total of 3,144,534 food items. The distributions were done in the affected governorates of Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, Tartous, and Homs within shelters and to the host and local communities.

The IFRC provided crucial support by facilitating SARCs procurement and distribution of 17,453 parcels of food, effectively reaching 17,453 households, which translates to aiding 84,354 individuals. The food parcels were distributed as follows, 11,300 in Aleppo, 300 in Hama, and 5,853 in Latakia. The provision of essential food items not only addresses immediate nutritional needs but also serves as a lifeline for families facing challenges such as food insecurity.

Livelihoods plays a key role in the recovery and resilience of people affected by earthquakes, thus SARC has it at the centre stage of the response. During the period under review, livelihood needs assessments were done in Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia for those affected by the earthquake. The inclusion of various livelihood and wealth groups in the assessment process, through data collection methods like Key Informants Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Household-level interviews, ensured understanding of the diverse impacts of the disaster. The assessment not only delved into the immediate consequences on livelihood assets but also considered coping strategies, market dynamics, and seasonal factors, providing a holistic view of the challenges faced by different communities.

The identification of relevant interventions, particularly the support for small business owners to protect and restart their livelihoods, demonstrates a targeted and strategic response to the specific needs of the affected populations. The dissemination of the project, receipt of applicants' applications, and the preparation of an initial list of potential beneficiaries reflects a transparent and inclusive process.

The ongoing entrepreneurship trainings indicate a commitment to capacity-building and empowering individuals to rebuild and sustain their livelihoods. Simultaneously continuing the livelihood needs assessment for different affected areas underscores a dynamic and adaptive approach, ensuring that interventions align with evolving

¹³ [Syria – Market Price Watch Bulletin, September 2023](#)

circumstances and emerging needs. This comprehensive strategy, from assessment to intervention and ongoing evaluation, exemplifies a thoughtful and community-driven response to post-disaster recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Consequently, from the assessments SARC with IFRC support initiated a livelihoods project to support the recovery of small businesses affected by the earthquake in Syria. A total of 448 households in Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama have been supported through the provision of cash to renew, and/or rehabilitate equipment, supplies, and infrastructures needed to restart or protect their livelihoods.

The implementation process of this project is as follows: first, a dissemination of the project is carried out in the selected areas. A period is opened for interested people to fill out an application form. The target population voluntarily applies to join the programme based on specific eligibility and criteria set in the call for applications. Next, a verification of the households who have submitted the application forms is conducted and the provisional list is set up. Afterwards, those selected attend the basic business management skills training and develop and present their business plan. An evaluation is made by the program team and the final list of those who will be supported through the program is set up.

Based on the steps of the implementation, in August, SARC Livelihood teams from Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia branches carried out the dissemination of the project in the selected areas. More than 800 households applied to join the program and a verification was carried out. The targeting criteria to join the program is: Mandatory criteria: Small business owners/IGA's affected by the earthquake and who have lost their source of income; Not benefiting from any similar livelihood program with another partner after the earthquake disaster; The family has access to a suitable place to set up the project. Conditional (vulnerability) criteria: Women breadwinners; Households with children under 5 years old; Households with pregnant women and the elderly; Households that have a PWD and/or Chronic illnesses; Households with a high dependency ratio.

After the household's verification, 596 were selected and attended the training. The programme team reviewed the business plans (the business has all the necessary requirements to be carried out) and 448 were selected to receive economic support in the form of conditional cash to start implementing activities. Out of the 448 participants in the training, 348 (78%) were men and 100 (22%) were women. The total people targeted through this project is 2,270.

The cash distribution started in October. Each family receives SYP 16,000,000 in two installments to restart their income-generating activity. The first installment is conditional on having attended the training and having the business plan approved and the second installment is conditional on having purchased the material detailed in the business plan. At the end of October, the first installment was sent to 92% of the households.

To ensure good planning and implementation of SARC's livelihoods projects through the Cash and Voucher Assistance modality, there is close coordination between SARC Livelihoods and Cash and Voucher Assistance teams from the assessment. The majority of the people targeted through this intervention have previously been assisted by SARC during the emergency phase with unconditional multipurpose cash assistance to address their basic needs. The assistance has been approved by the operational rooms or the local government authorities.

SARC branch livelihood staff and volunteers (45 volunteers have been supporting this program) set up a monitoring system (baseline, post distribution monitoring, end line) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) initiatives to engage and communicate with the affected population more effectively in order to better understand their diverse needs, vulnerabilities and capacities; to gather, respond to and act on their feedback, priorities, and preferences and provide them with opportunities to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The provision of cash to renew, rehabilitate, or protect equipment, supplies, and infrastructures enables households to restart their income-generating activities will ultimately contribute to the economic recovery and stability for the earthquake-affected families. On the other hand, the basic business management skills training aims to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their businesses effectively, potentially leading to improved productivity and profitability. Since this marks the initial month following the distribution of the first instalment of conditional cash, upcoming monitoring visits will be conducted to evaluate the progress, impact, and sustainability of the project on the businesses.



Basic business management skills training in Lattakia. Source: SARC.



Multi-purpose Cash

Objective:	<i>The affected households are provided with unconditional multipurpose cash assistance to address their basic needs (life-saving and longer-term) in an accountable and participatory manner.</i>			
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	Indicator	SARC actual	IFRC actual	IFRC target
Key indicators:	<i>Number of households targeted with multi-purpose cash assistance</i>	15,654	5,942	15,000
	<i>Total spent for operation in CHF as multi-purpose cash transfer</i>	4,844,870	1,839,033	4,800,000

SARC's Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA) team is carrying out a comprehensive registration exercise of earthquake-affected populations across all affected governorates. The data collected informs the identification of the most affected families (loss of income/livelihoods and/or shelter as well as additional vulnerability criteria), enables the cash transfers once families are selected, and is used for deduplication of efforts between SARC and external partners. The registration database will also inform other sectoral responses including livelihoods support.

The recommended cash transfer value for Multi-purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) (SYP 1,050,000 per month) was endorsed by the National Cash Working Group (CWG) in March 2023. The monthly transfer value was based on 60 % of the full Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) as of December 2022 and costs for essential lost NFI items. The MEB covers the most essential items including items that families lost in the earthquake. The basket and transfer value has been calculated by the CWG in consultation with other sectors and clusters in the country, meaning that all other actors will follow the same values according to their sector. SARC has been registering affected people, carrying out the verification process and coordinating with the Operations Rooms of the affected governorates.

During this reporting period, SARC distributed cash assistance in Hama, Aleppo, Latakia, and Idlib to 15,654 families (Reaching approximately 78,270 people), worth SYP 3,150,000 per family with the support of Movement and external partners.

Through the support of the IFRC, SARC distributed MPCA to 5,942 households (approximately 29,710 people). This distribution accounted for 37% of the households reached by SARC through MPCA. Cash transfers are made through Al Fouad remittance company with whom SARC has a long-term service agreement (aligned with IFRC procurement standards). Cash-out points are operational and still functioning after the earthquake. Al Fouad has extensive coverage in the affected areas. Once the final list of targeted households reaches Al Fouad, the registered cash recipient receives a text message that their money is available at the nearest agent or agent of their choice.

Field monitoring visits have been conducted, and the families interviewed stated that due to the increasing cost of living and high prices for shelter repairs the amount received was not enough to cover their basic needs. Rent, food and health costs were the highest expenditures reported. Families visited during the field monitoring visits reported that they did not face any issues collecting assistance from the selected Financial Service Provider, nor spending the assistance in their local markets (items are available, yet at increased prices as mentioned above). Families stated that they were treated with respect by the Financial Service Provider and SARC staff and were grateful for the assistance received.

The impact of Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) on families affected by the earthquake is profound. The flexibility provided by cash assistance has enabled Syrian families to address a diverse range of basic needs such as food, water, clothing, and essential household items. This adaptability has empowered families to make decisions tailored to their unique circumstances and priorities. Moreover, MPCA plays a pivotal role in relieving economic strain among earthquake-affected families. By providing resources, it catalyzes kickstarting recovery initiatives and engaging in economic activities. This financial support has the potential to contribute significantly to cover the basic needs of the people affected by the earthquake. It stands as a crucial element in not only addressing urgent needs but also laying the groundwork for sustained recovery and resilience within the earthquake-affected communities in Syria.

Post-distribution monitoring is in progress, and the results, including outcome indicators and findings, will be documented and reported in the upcoming reporting cycle.



SARC Volunteers supporting Cash distributions. Source: SARC.

After 7 months of seeking shelter at the Khan Sheikhun shelter center in the countryside of Idlib, Abo Mohamed, and his five children finally left the temporary facility. They had been displaced from their own home when it was struck by an earthquake. However, now there is a glimmer of hope as Abo Mohamed's daughter is preparing for her high school diploma, studying once again in the safety and privacy of their own space.

Reflecting on their journey, Abo Mohamed, a 50-year-old father, expressed his relief at being able to repair the cracks in the walls and install a door. These small actions gave him a renewed sense of security. He shared, "It felt safe again." This newfound safety was made possible through the cash aid provided to those affected by the earthquake. Through the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 122 families like Abo Mohamed's have received assistance.

This story highlights the resilience of individuals and communities in the face of adversity. It also emphasizes the importance of humanitarian organizations like the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the IFRC, who work tirelessly to support those in need during times of crisis. Through their collective efforts, families like Abo Mohamed are allowed to rebuild their lives and create a brighter future for themselves and their children.



Health & Care¹⁴

(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)

Objective:	<i>Restored access of affected populations to essential health care services (emergency, primary, secondary, community/public health) including mental health and psychosocial support.</i>			
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	Indicator	SARC Actual	IFRC Actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i>Number of people reached with primary health services</i>	3,076,308	871,616 ¹⁵	731,827
	<i>Number of local health facilities supported with staff, equipment and/or running costs for the provision of medical services in emergencies</i>	132	37 (DRC, GRC, IFRC, NRC, Swedish RC supported)	49

During the reporting period, SARC provided a total of 4,161,232 medical services that reached 3,076,308 people. The medical services provided were through static health facilities, mobile health units, mobile medical teams, physiotherapy mobile teams and centers, mental health clinics, nutrition clinics, and CBHFA volunteers, in the affected areas.

SARC extended the Mental Health services, through establishing 4 new MH clinics in Aleppo, Lattakia, Homs, and Hama, to provide Psychotherapy, speech therapy, MH disorders diagnosis and follow-up, social services, and medication for the beneficiaries. The 10 operating mental health clinics are supported by the Swedish Red Cross.

¹⁴ The data reported is what has been done collectively by the SARC partners.

¹⁵ The data sums the people reached through MHUs, MMTs, Physiotherapy, clinics, and nutrition services.

As health is one of the main strategic pillars of the earthquake response, significant efforts have been made by SARC and RCRC movement partners to streamline coordination. Given the vast areas of expertise within the SARC Health Department and the health expertise of the various RCRC partners in the country, several health technical working groups have been formed with the aim of harmonizing approaches, ensuring an integrated results-based approach, and identifying gaps in terms of budgetary needs and additional technical support. During the reporting period, movement-wide meetings took place regularly where SARC, Partner National Societies (PNS), and ICRC were able to clearly identify budgetary gaps and agree on ways to address these, in addition to in-kind contributions and other technical support.

An Emergency Response Unit (**ERU**) was deployed in a mobile clinic configuration to the Lattakia governate under the lead of the Finnish Red Cross in coordination with the Canadian Red Cross, German Red Cross, and Japanese Red Cross, and with in-kind support from the French Red Cross and the Portuguese Red Cross. The mobile clinic provided comprehensive primary care services including maternal and child, infectious disease, and non-communicable disease services. In total, the ERU and SARC's mobile clinics provided 225,318 services reaching 112,659 people. Vehicles were provided by the German Red Cross and Portuguese Red Cross and medicines, consumables, and equipment were provided by the French Red Cross and Japanese Red Cross. In addition to the above, IFRC is procuring two Vehicles for SARC's "Medical Emergency Response Unit" (**MERU**). These units will also support SARC in establishing its own rapid response mechanism. After the handover of the ERU to SARC on August 15th, the same team continued providing primary care services as MERU with support from the Danish Red Cross. Between 15th August and 30th September, a total of 1,006 consultations were provided to patients in four different underserved locations in urban and rural Lattakia. It is worth mentioning that – starting from September - a team of trained Nutrition volunteers accompanied the regular MERU staff and provided awareness raising sessions as well as checks to children and lactating women, as needed. In line with the original plan, the MERU operations ended on 15th October. The mobile clinics provided comprehensive primary care services including maternal and child, infectious disease, and non-communicable disease services. The Canadian Red Cross will provide the technical and financial support to help SARC build its own MERU capacity.

Following the period immediately after the earthquake, Mobile Health Units (**MHU**) started supporting earthquake-affected areas immediately. In the first few weeks, some MHU worked 24 hours with several medical staff working in shifts and overtime. The MHUs are mobile, fully equipped teams that include a general practitioner, a nurse, an administrative person, and a driver that focus their services within shelters and rural areas, reaching out to beneficiaries who lack regular access to health care, 6 days per week from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. The core of the MHU provides first aid and internal medicine services, MNCH, gynecological services, and simple diagnostic services. In some cases, MHUs also provide referrals to secondary and tertiary care facilities. A total of 3 new MHUs were activated in Lattakia with the support of DRC. During the reporting period, SARC's MHU teams reached 258,130 people with 516,260 services. Seven teams operating in the earthquake-affected areas are supported by the IFRC.

Immediately after the earthquake, Mobile Medical Teams (**MMT**) also went to shelters and provided medical services and consultations through their medical teams which included a general practitioner/gynecologist, a nurse, and a midwife. Consultation services, medication provision, and health promotion messages were provided to the people in need. Other team members in the MMTs included a health educator, providing sensitization on different health-related topics, a technical specialist, who provided individual consultation services on mental health issues, and volunteers supporting the MMT teams by providing different services. During the reporting period, MMT teams reached 123,181 people with 221,426 services. IFRC is supporting 28 MMTs through the earthquake appeal.

Through the Disability Inclusion and Physiotherapy Project implemented by SARC with support from the IFRC, a total of 92,638 people, and caregivers, received multidisciplinary medical and rehabilitation services at different shelters in Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama. A total of 24,113 people with varying types of disabilities (i.e., physical, visual, hearing, and psychosocial) received **Physiotherapy, Medical, and Nursing Services** with multiple service

sessions. Additionally, 1,133 people with disabilities received several types of assistive devices, including wheelchairs, crutches, and walking frames, to improve the mobility of the affected individuals.

SARC extended the Mental Health services, through establishing 4 new MH clinics in Aleppo, Lattakia, Homs, and Hama, to provide Psychotherapy, speech therapy, MH disorders diagnosis and follow-up, social services, and medication for the beneficiaries. SRC supports the 10 operating mental health clinics.

International procurement of **medical equipment** for three SARC hospitals (Al Zahera in Damascus, the Children Hospital in Aleppo and SARC hospital in Homs) by the end of the reporting period. This includes specialised instruments such as mammography, endoscopy, operation theatre equipment and heart rate monitoring systems etc. for improved and speedier diagnostics and treatment of severe illnesses and fasten the recovery process. The equipment will be delivered and installed in several instances depending on the country of departure, delivery lead times and shipping. IFRC also supported the cost of employment for the internal medicine and pediatric clinics in 16 SARC primary health clinics. This is complementary to SARC's partnership with UNFPA who is supporting the gynecological clinic and the operational costs of the clinics. Some equipment arrived at the hospital/clinic and the installation process has started.

SARC's Emergency Medical Services (**EMS**) volunteers were equipped with 1,865 sets of uniforms consisting of a winter jacket, trousers, long shirt, a T-shirt, a vest and heavy-duty boots. These uniforms with the required SARC insignia are essential to provide protection and safety for SARC's ambulance volunteers in their rescue and first aid operations. To support and improve SARC pre-hospital care services for earthquake-affected communities, the Swiss Red Cross focused on providing first aid training to earthquake-affected communities. A total of 40 trainings have been scheduled for members of these communities until the end of November. In addition to supporting running costs related to EMS services in areas affected by the earthquake.

From the first hours following the disaster, the Community-Based Health and First Aid (**CBHFA**) teams were on the ground providing support to the persons affected, including evacuation of damaged buildings, support in setting up shelters, provide psychological first aid (PFA), and first aid services to those in need. In the following months, the teams worked closely with the people residing inside the temporary shelters by, first, establishing health committees, and then, providing sensitization sessions and tackling different health issues that were arising following the earthquake, including lice, scabies, COVID-19 and others. Support to people suffering from Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) was also continued. Among the activities conducted, prevention and mitigation of AWD/Cholera cases was of particular focus for the teams. Sensitization sessions/messages were shared with whole communities, and suspected cases were identified and supported during home isolation. Community-based management of AWD/Cholera was also undertaken, and patients were followed up until their symptoms subsided, or referred to specialized service providers if the need was identified. Norwegian Red Cross provided SARC health department with different type of Cholera kits (Community kit, PHC kits), and the Swiss Red Cross provided ORS. During the reporting period, 1,970,056 people were reached with sensitization and health promotion activities.

Norwegian Red Cross and German Red Cross allocated extra fund to secure the sustainability and expand the services of the MNCH program in Al Zahera hospital and Aleppo children hospital (normal delivery, c-section, incubators, surgical operations, lab tests, X-ray and MRI). This complements the procurement of medical equipment by the IFRC. German Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross supported SARC with medicine, medical consumables, medical tools and equipment as in-kind.



Health promotion session at community hall



Mobile Health Unit at Tartus village



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Objective:

Reduce the risk of waterborne diseases and ensured the dignity of the affected population through the provision of inclusive WASH services.

Key indicators:

Indicator	SARC Actual	IFRC actual	Target
<i>Number of people reached by WASH assistance</i>	665,166	161,412	936,267
<i>Number of people reached with hygiene supplies</i>	215,055	161,412	463,996

During the period under review, SARC's WASH department conducted a Rapid assessment for water & sanitation infrastructure, and electricity networks across all affected governorates, 310 houses were also assessed, in addition to assessment for 32 SARC facilities, and an assessment of damages of 55 central water tanks, in addition, to implementing a need assessment of the SARC Children's Hospital and assessed Al-Razi Hospital in Aleppo. SARC installed 48 water tanks with different capacities, providing 46 metal barrels and 6 water pumps in addition to 29 water heaters, and supplying (15,025 m³) of water through cisterns. SARC distributed 119,304 water bottles and 11,472 jerry-cans in shelters, in addition to distributing 39,066 hygiene kits and 165,221 other items among displaced families and host communities.

SARC undertook light rehabilitation works in 43 collective centers in the immediate weeks after the earthquake. In-kind relief items comprising of hygiene kits, menstrual hygiene management kits, anti-lice shampoo, diapers, soap etc were distributed in the collective centers and to host communities.

In Lattakia, 5 electricity generating sets were allocated to bakeries, while Aleppo and Hama received 14 generators, 29 batteries (200A), 41 solar lights (100W), and 14 electrical transformers. The WASH department also played a key role in the maintenance of collective kitchens and bakeries. In Idlib the installation of two electrical transformers for shelters, the provision of six batteries, 10 electric chargers, 4 solar lights, and the installation of 17 water taps and 4 showers within shelters were undertaken. Rehabilitation efforts were also supported in one of the SARC clinics in

Aleppo. The hygiene promotion unit raised awareness on topics including cholera prevention and hygiene practices. SARC has an instrumental role in rehabilitating the Aleppo water equilibrium line that is daily providing water to more than 2.5 million residents of Aleppo city governorates. This is a joint undertaking with several partners that has a significant importance for the people's access to clean water.

Through the support of IFRC, SARC conducted two epidemic control for volunteer (ECV) trainings for WASH and health coordinators in the affected branches. The primary objective of the training was to equip the branch coordinators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively handle epidemic control situations. It is expected that the coordinators will cascade the knowledge to the other WASH teams at their respective branches. One of the action items from the training is the development of an "Epidemic control plan".

A total of 26,691 hygiene kits, which accounted for 68% of the hygiene kits distributed by SARC, were distributed to the following branches in Aleppo, Lattakia, Homs, and Hama through the support of IFRC. The hygiene kits reached a total of 137,471 people. Additionally, IFRC procured 13,197 menstrual and hygiene kits and 16,500 lice spray out of which 5,216 kits were distributed reaching 23,941 people, with the distribution of the other items underway. The menstrual and hygiene kits specifically support women's health, ensuring that their unique needs are recognized and met during the recovery process.

During the reporting period, IFRC launched the procurement of 1,200 plastic tanks with a capacity of 1 – 3 cubic meters for household-level use. Finally, SARC initiated planning activities for the light rehabilitation of schools and community water towers affected by the earthquake in Idleb governorate through the joint support of IFRC, the Norwegian Red Cross and the German Red Cross. The rehabilitation of schools will have a positive impact on the educational well-being of children and the broader community. The delivery of special needs kits procured by the IFRC was completed. These kits are meant for adults and the elderly and contain diapers, soap, lotion and other hygiene articles. 39 generators of various voltage were delivered and will be installed to support the operations of boreholes and water pumping stations.



SARC staff and volunteers preparing for distribution of hygiene kits. Source: SARC.



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

Objective:

Ensure that Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety (DAPS) is considered a safe and inclusive response, by strengthening SARC's PGI capacities, mainstreaming of PGI and safeguarding in relevant technical sectors, and strengthening of protection services.

Key indicators:

Indicator	SARC actual	IFRC actual	Target
Number of people trained on implementing the PGI Minimum Standards	147	80	4,965

SARC during the reporting period, reached a total of 403,711 beneficiaries with Protection and Community Services in the earthquake-affected Governorates. Awareness sessions were conducted, disseminating crucial information on safety and security measures during earthquakes, panic management, childcare, grief and loss, and sessions addressing sex and gender-based violence to 206,382. Additionally, 160 beneficiaries received in-kind assistance, and 189 focus group discussion sessions were conducted. Specialized psychological first aid services were provided to 34,157 beneficiaries, with a particular emphasis on children, complemented by shelter services, including recreational activities for 35,894 kids. Additionally, case management services and referrals to medical, legal, and

mental health services were extended to 14,387 beneficiaries across all age groups. The holistic approach continued with 90,898 structured activities catering to various age groups, 21,537 education services, and 107 peer support activities.

IFRC has provided essential support to the Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) efforts within the response. This backing signifies a commitment to ensuring that the response is not only effective but also aligned with principles that prioritize protection, gender sensitivity, and inclusivity. Through the IFRC support, SARC conducted two workshops on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) minimum standards and Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety (DAPS), and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Psychosocial Support (PSS), and safe identification. Awareness-raising events were organized for persons with disabilities and caregivers on opportunities, empowerment, and life/success stories of people with disabilities linked to the overall programme on physiotherapy and disability inclusion in the affected governorates.



Risk Reduction, climate adaptation, and Recovery

Objective:

Strengthen resilience and capacities of disaster and crisis affected communities through climate-smart community-based risk reduction actions informed by enhanced Vulnerability Capacity Assessments and advanced planning.

SARC's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) overarching approach includes resilience building with communities based on vulnerability and capacity assessments undertaken in several governorate as part of SARC's ongoing programmes and operations. SARC aims to empower communities and build their resilience in the face of disasters, through collaborative efforts and a multisectoral approach.

Risk Reduction and Climate adaptation are expected to be central components of recovery planning. Currently, SARC with the support of the IFRC, its membership, and in coordination with other UN Agencies, is discussing plans for early recovery assessments to inform the subsequent planning.

The following activities will be prioritized, depending on funding:

1. Climate change adaptation training
2. Training on improvements and early action mechanism
3. Training on risk context and identification of high-risk areas
4. Community-based interventions

During the reporting period, SARC's Disaster Management team conducted capacity-building workshops to enhance SARC's staff and volunteer competencies in earthquake-related topics including evacuation plans and corrective actions before, during, and after an earthquake while working with the communities to understand the risks, mitigation, and adaptation. A total of 50 workshops related to disaster risk reduction have been conducted since the earthquake with the participation of 718 volunteers and 334 staff.

SARC has been working with the IFRC Climate and Resilience Team from its MENA Regional Office on community-based disaster risk reduction, specifically focusing on Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (eVCA). Following the earthquake in February 2023, SARC's Homs branch initiated the implementation of eVCA, prioritizing earthquakes as a key hazard. IFRC technical focal person from its regional office and SARC conducted a field visit to Old Homs City to validate vulnerabilities and capacities

within the community. Five key resilience dimensions were identified as high-priority areas for intervention: risk management, health, infrastructure, and basic services, food security and nutrition, and economic opportunities. During the visit, the community pinpointed various activities to address vulnerabilities and enhance capacities. This also involved delineating the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders actively engaged in the community. This project serves as a pilot initiative, to be replicated in four other communities in Homs, with the overarching goal of scaling it up across Syria.

The replication and expansion of these initiatives will lead to the development of 14 governorate profiles based on individual vulnerability and capacity assessments and hazard mapping and analysis. This step will be followed by contingency planning, simulation exercises, validation, and operationalization of the 14 contingency plans in each governorate.

During the period under review, the IFRC MENA Regional Office convened a consultative meeting in hybrid format with SARC and key Movement members (Syria-based PNSs, regional PNSs, ICRC, some MENA NSs). The broad objective was to discuss critical resilience-strengthening interventions and existing challenges, as well as the way forward for creating an enabling environment for mid to long term resilience strengthening efforts to flourish and people to get back on their feet.

Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objectives:

*To reinforce SARC HQ and branch capacities to respond to the operation (repair structures) and enhance volunteer and staff competencies in preparedness and response and continued service delivery in an inclusive manner.
SARC responds effectively to the wide spectrum of evolving crises and its auxiliary role in disaster risk management is well-defined and recognized.*

	Indicator	SARC actual	IFRC actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i>National Society has improved their preparedness, contingency and response plans as a result of the recommendations and evidence of the operation</i>	YES	YES	YES
	<i>Number of volunteers provided with equipment for protection, safety and support (e.g., PFA) appropriate to the emergency</i>		913	7,000

The necessary support is being provided to SARC response operations in the prioritized areas and sub-sectors while ensuring relevance, quality, and coverage of relief and services. Mainly, the areas of support entail strengthening the capacities of the affected branches through software and hardware support, including logistics, warehousing and fleet, implementing branch activities prioritized by PER approach-based assessments, strengthening volunteer management and development, disseminating SARC policies, Code of Conduct, Welcome to SARC to equip branch staff and volunteers with sufficient knowledge to apply them into practice, mainstreaming CEA and PGI in operations and services, and supporting SARC in strengthening financial sustainability.

Based on lessons learned from the Earthquake response and previous emergency response operations, SARC has improved its contingency and response plans and the coordination mechanisms for effective response. The National Society conducted the Planning Workshop (June, 2023) to review and update the SARC Earthquake Response Plan, to apply the lessons and recommendations provided, and to integrate medium- and long-term recovery and resilience measures in the EQ-response plan. IFRC country and regional staff supported SARC in organizing and facilitating the workshop where the SARC senior and middle management, staff and volunteers from the affected branches and the Movement partners (IFRC, ICRC, and PNSs) were presented, ultimately providing an opportunity for all programmatic sectors to harmonize, coordinate and plan core community-based interventions over the next two years and to integrate NSD and support services into the planning and budgeting for emergency response and longer-term programming that should form the basis for assisting communities to recover from the earthquake and build resilience. IFRC has supported SARC to develop the Resilience Approach in line with its new Strategy for 2023-2027.

SARC, with the technical support of the IFRC country delegate, continued to work on the volunteer management and development priorities to address the challenges and gaps revealed by the Political, Economic, Sociocultural,

Technological, Environmental, Legal (PESTLE) and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. SARC finalized the Volunteering Development Approach, focusing on improving the volunteer management cycle during emergencies and in peacetime, as well as on supporting and encouraging community-based service delivery by giving the volunteers diverse opportunities for development and leading local action.

The preparatory work is being undertaken by the relevant IFRC country and regional staff to facilitate and conduct a workshop for all concerned departments and units (Human Resources, Disaster Management, National Society Development & Strategic Planning, Community Services and Protection, etc.) at SARC headquarters and branches to standardize current practices and procedures for managing volunteers and supporting developmental initiatives to review and develop the volunteer management cycle and start developing the Volunteering Policy; all based on findings and reflections of relevant staff and volunteer leaders during the roundtable meetings and field visits in the affected branches. The impact of the Middle East crisis affected the planned visit of IFRC regional staff to conduct a workshop with the support and facilitation of the IFRC country delegate, and it was rescheduled to January 2024.

Within the earthquake response, to enhance the role of volunteers and their importance in communicating with the community effectively and reliably, briefing sessions were provided to 579 volunteers about the activities and services provided by the programs within the organization based on the Welcome to SARC guide, and briefing sessions on the Code of Conduct in addition to trained 80 volunteers about the CEA procedures and feedback channels to apply the knowledge and skills while fulfilling their duties during operations and day-to-day work. Besides, 913 staff and volunteers in the affected branches received Psychological First Aid (PFA) briefing sessions provided by the Community Services and Protection Unit.

The IFRC Global Learning & Development Team provided technical support and guidance to the SARC NSD team in designing and developing a unified training toolkit based on the proposal developed by SARC with the technical support of the IFRC country delegate. The revision is ongoing for the Welcome to SARC induction training programme based on the suggestions provided on the design and implementation of such an initiative from a learning perspective and to ensure that staff and volunteers are well prepared and aligned with the organization's values and mission. SARC conducted the workshop with programmes and branch representatives to obtain their reflections on the training toolkit.

SARC developed the ODK feedback forms to link services delivered to the affected people with CEA and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) by comprehensive digitized information management solutions. The NS recruited 25 CEA volunteers and provided training in CEA. Standard Operating Procedures have been reviewed and updated. The Information Management (IM) team has transferred all questionnaires to the SARC server, integrating offline maps into a unified database platform. SARC is supported by the IFRC Capacity Building Fund to strengthen digital transformation, focusing on developing the Digital Transformation Approach, determining the organization-wide digital maturity level through branch self-assessments in all 14 branches (QuickScan tool), and developing and validating the Digital Transformation Roadmap to be used as a guiding document for digital transformation. The IFRC regional staff conducted the ICT Health Check assessment as one of the requirements to ensure successful digital transformation. SARC started implementing the recommendations to address identified challenges and gaps.

In terms of integrating the CEA approach across earthquake response operations, SARC launched a feedback mechanism pilot with the DM to four affected branches, as well as with Cash in Aleppo and Hama. SARC has started working on testing CEA institutionalizing tools in DM, Cash, Livelihood, and Health programs and continues to support programs via the MEAL team with CEA-related cross-cutting activities. As part of the SARC CEA approach, communities are actively engaged in all phases of SARC response operations by adopting a participatory approach, listening to their needs, and using their feedback to improve and adapt response operations. Standardized

community feedback channels were adopted to collect complaints, questions, and requests in the affected governorates related to response interventions.

SARC NSD and CEA teams conduct regular monitoring by visiting the affected branches on the ground to track progress and ensure timely completion of work per requirements of the SARC EQ response operations.

The IFRC supported SARC in developing the cost recovery policy with the active participation of the concerned NS departments and units and the Movement partners, based on active consultation with them. This initiative is part of SARC's SARC Financial Sustainability Plan, which focuses on identifying core costs and mobilizing local resources to mitigate the risks of dependence on external funds and maintaining essential services.

To strengthen and support SARC's operations on the ground and the movement of SARC teams, IFRC procured from the Global Fleet Unit for SARC nine 4x4 vehicles. The procurement of IT and Telecom equipment for SARC has been finalized, including equipment for HQ and branches, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). This strategic procurement aims to provide reliable and versatile transportation, ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of SARC's operations in response to the earthquake and related activities. The procurement of IT and Telecom equipment for staff and volunteers is essential in providing them with the required working tools for managing data in a safe manner, planning and reporting etc. In particular, in the branches, staff and volunteers are working on old laptops or using their equipment exposing the organization to security breaches and loss of essential and sensitive data and information. The equipment for the EMS will improve the operation of radio room dispatch centers for the ambulances, making it possible to coordinate the ambulance movements and dispatch for lifesaving first aid services. Specialized equipment is also being procured for the Communications and Media team allowing the production of high-resolution audio-visual products, and the Information Management analysts who are handling, collating and analyzing large quantities of data. Sanctions licenses for all the equipment and software are required prior to the procurement and this delayed the process. The EMS ambulance volunteers were also equipped with 1,865 sets of uniforms consisting of a winter jacket, trousers, a long shirt, a T-shirt, a vest and heavy-duty boots. These are essential in protecting the volunteers for the safe removal and transport of patients.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:

Ensure a well-coordinated emergency operation and availability of funding.

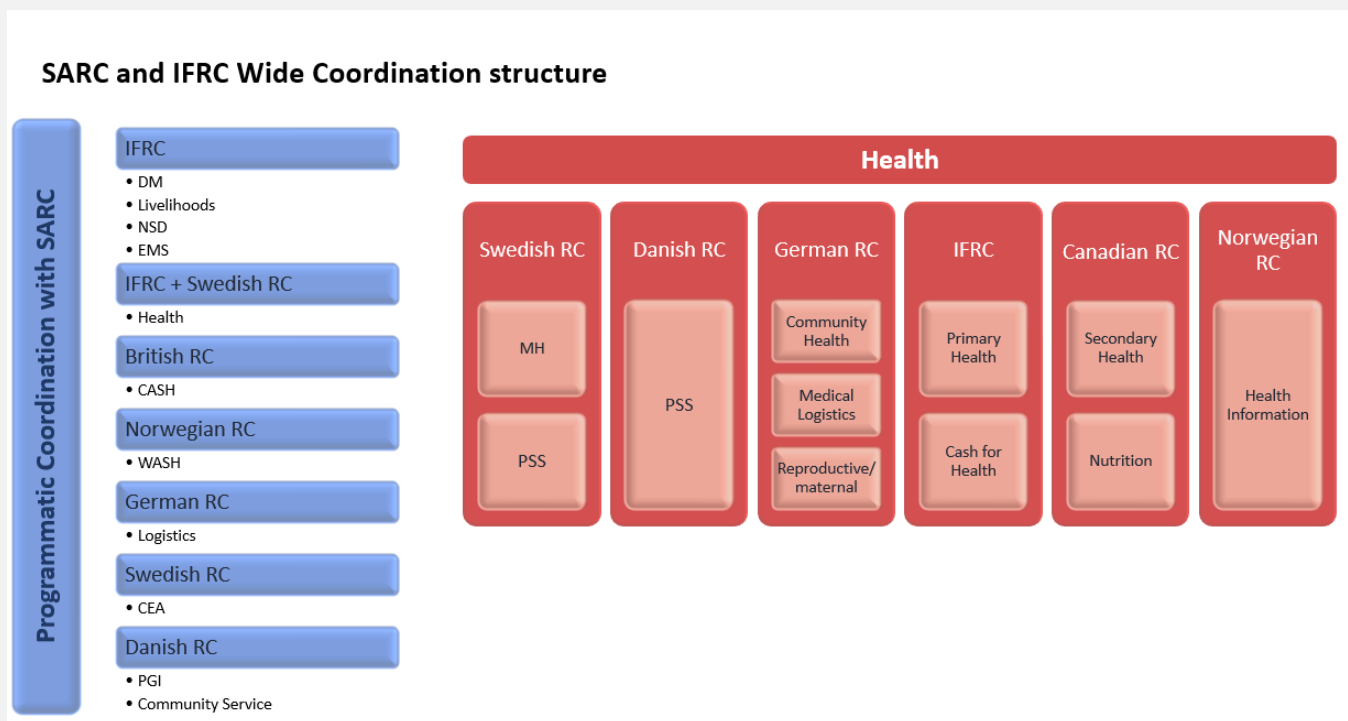
Key indicators:	Indicator	SARC actual	IFRC actual	Target
	<i>Movement coordination meetings organized, and updates are provided to the Movement partners</i>	YES	YES	YES

IFRC Membership

The Emergency Appeal is part of a Federation-Wide approach, based on the response priorities of SARC and in consultation with all the Federation members contributing to it, integrating holistic planning within the operational strategy. It takes into consideration the programmatic sectorial experiences of in-country Partner National Societies with SARC, and assigns co-lead coordination positioning, with SARC being the lead organization for strategic, operational and sectoral Movement coordination. The approach ensures linkages between all response activities (including bilateral activities) and assists in leveraging the capacities of all members of the IFRC network, to maximize

the collective humanitarian impact integrated under one plan. This process helped identify the need for surge personnel, avoided overlaps and allowed the wider membership to tap into and share technical resources.

Currently, eight Partner National Societies have in-country presence, based at SARC HQ, including the British, Canadian, Danish, French, German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Swiss Red Cross Societies. The IFRC supported SARC and the Membership in mapping each partner's areas of expertise and thematic areas were assigned for the respective partner with the task to support SARC in the Movement Coordination. Concretely, each programmatic area (e.g., Health and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, WASH & Shelter, Livelihoods, and Relief) is organized under one co-lead working as counterparts for the respective technical department within SARC to ensure coherence and consistency for partner input, and in turn, provide information to partners for reporting. The technical leads build on existing structures and capacities in-country, provided by each of the partners present. Support from SARC technical advisory functions in NSD, CEA, PGI, Cash, and Logistics is organized following the same principle of shared leadership, allowing for partners best placed to co-lead with SARC in these cross-cutting functions.



SARC and IFRC Wide Coordination Structure

In its role as membership coordinator, IFRC has been co-leading with SARC the structure for the overall operation, and ensuring relevant and timely technical, HR, and financial resources. The intent behind this approach is to have larger humanitarian impact from combined and coordinated resources and position SARC's critical role in the response.

Some of the ongoing activities include:

- Ongoing information sharing, inter alia in coordination at the technical working group level, on all activities by IFRC-membership partners.
- Feeding into a harmonized Federation-wide MEAL plan; including a logframe that aligns with the SARC response plan and the IFRC Operational Strategy for a coordinated approach to measuring the impact of the membership-wide response.
- Coordination of field movements of membership partners, including visits by IFRC, National Societies, and donors, to affected regions to reduce the burden on impacted persons, and SARC branch staff and volunteers.

- A unified voice vis-à-vis SARC with respect to approach, standards, and expectations (both technical and strategic).

Movement Coordination

SARC is leading Movement Coordination in Syria. Prior to and since the onset of the emergency, regular coordination meetings, led by SARC, have brought together Movement partners to scale up actions in response to the earthquake and increase the collective impact of the Movement in Syria. Partners mobilized resources and reallocated in-country resources to support the SARC response plan. In line with the Seville Agreement 2.0, SARC holds the role of convener for all aspects of the response and has the central role in co-creating, delivering, and coordinating the Movement's collective response, in accordance with its operational plans and capacity. In that spirit, a Mini-Summit was held on 2 March, and a Joint Statement was issued that articulates the commitment, roles, and responsibilities of SARC, IFRC, and ICRC, thus strengthening existing Movement Coordination mechanisms. A collaborative approach to drawing up and disseminating guidelines and key messages related to the earthquake was also agreed upon during the Mini-Summit.

Security and safety of the operation and staff is coordinated according to the defined roles and responsibilities of respective Movement components in the Movement Security Framework Agreement. SARC has the role of convener in aspects related to security. To foster coordination within the region, Regional PNS calls are being held on a bi-weekly basis facilitated by the IFRC Operations Manager.

Interagency Coordination

IFRC has been liaising actively together with SARC with country-level coordination structures, including the Shelter and Health Clusters, and the Cash Working Group, to ensure that gaps are identified and contribute to collaboration at the national level. Engagement is also ongoing for the response in hard-to-reach areas in northwest Syria, with support from the IFRC. Despite efforts to reach impacted people in NWS, SARC has not been granted regular access for the purpose of delivering humanitarian assistance.

Fundraising and Engagement with External Stakeholders

SARC with the identified technical national society participates in country-level inter agency coordination structures, including Livelihoods and Food Security and Health Clusters, and the Cash Technical Working Group, to ensure that gaps are identified and contribute to collaboration at the national level. SARC is an active member of the High Relief Committee, the highest body responsible for coordinating matters related to disasters and crisis in Syria, and the equivalent governorate level Operations Rooms. This has facilitated inter-agency coordination and set the direction of the response at an operational level. SARC, IFRC and ICRC also participate in the Humanitarian Country Team meetings in capacity of observers.

The SARC Grants Management & Partnership Support Unit has successfully implemented a mobilization Table (Mob Table) and a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), significantly improving our ability to track resources, allocate funds efficiently, and ensure transparency in operations.

Diverse Partnerships and Network Expansion: The Grants Management & Partnership Support Unit plays a vital role in the development and execution of concept notes, proposals, and agreements, ensuring alignment with organizational strategic objectives. To streamline and enhance this process, a dedicated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is currently in development.

Recognizing the growing need for resources, the unit has actively expanded its network of partners. While continuing to work with existing partners like the French Red Cross and the Austrian Red Cross, the unit has successfully initiated collaborations with the American Red Cross and the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Support. These new partnerships open up additional channels for support and resources, reinforcing the unit's commitment to effective grants management and partnership development.

Facility Mapping and Support Overview: To enhance coordination and provide stakeholders with a clear overview, the Grants Management & Partnership Support Unit has created a partnership map. This map visually represents the various facilities supported and aid provided in different locations, serving as a valuable reference.

Enhanced Accountability in Grants: The Grants Management & Partnership Support Unit has been diligently following up on both in-kind and cash grants to ensure effective and efficient resource utilization. This rigorous oversight guarantees that donors' contributions are allocated appropriately, enhancement of the reporting, and process efficient handling of documentation.

Empowering Fundraising Efforts: The Grants Management & Partnership Support Unit is currently working on enabling SARC to address funding gaps by enhancing fundraising efforts. This initiative involves utilizing a multi-language software platform developed by iRaiser to facilitate global online fundraising.

Humanitarian Diplomacy and Influencing

IFRC continues to play a crucial role in humanitarian diplomacy in response to the earthquake emergency in Syria, engaging with a range of actors, including governments, inter-governmental organizations, other humanitarian players, and the media, to ensure that the needs of those affected by the emergency are well addressed and met. The IFRC uses its humanitarian diplomacy efforts to engage with relevant actors to secure support for the response efforts and emphasize SARC's neutral, impartial, and independent position.

The key recommendations from the workshop "Community Resilience Strengthening in a Changing Syria" in July were to strengthen longer-term donor base and funding, equip SARC to better navigate a changing landscape while scaling up its resilience profile, have a unified position on strategic issues, increase capacity to navigate legal impediments to humanitarian response and community strengthening efforts. Together with the Membership, in particular the Swedish Red Cross, IFRC and SARC continue to strengthen humanitarian diplomacy and influencing efforts.



Secretariat Services

Objective:

The IFRC is working as one organization, delivering what it promises to National Societies and volunteers, and leveraging the strength of the communities with which they work as effectively and efficiently as possible. The Secretariat provides strategic orientation, facilitation, and coordination considering long-term positioning and further capacity development of the National Society. This will be done by building on existing structures for large-scale programming, toward strong guardianship and accountability for all programming. The IFRC Secretariat will facilitate channeling global resources to sustain the localized response and recovery efforts.

Human Resources

Since the beginning of the earthquake response, IFRC Syria Delegation has taken the following steps to ensure a coordinated response across the Membership:

- During the initial months of the response the IFRC surge mechanism was effectively employed to ensure the availability of human resources and trained personnel to areas where their skills and expertise were urgently needed thus reinforcing the capacity of SARC.
- Recruitment of key positions has been completed to provide continuing Secretariat services to SARC and the wider Membership in Syria, focusing on the specific value add of IFRC and the services and leadership provided by in-country members. These include Operations Manager, PMER Delegate, Procurement

Delegate, Security Delegate, Risk Management Delegate and a Health Coordinator seconded from the Japanese Red Cross.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply Chain Coordinator, Earthquake, Syria (2 Months) <p>British Red Cross</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Coordinator, Earthquake, Syria (2 Months) <p>Finnish Red Cross</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Officer, Earthquake, Syria (1 Month) <p>German Red Cross</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRD Officer, Earthquake, Syria (based in Lebanon) (3 Months) <p>IFRC Americas</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter Coordinator, 2nd rotation, Earthquake, Syria (2 Months) <p>IFRC Asia Pacific</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Emergency Operations, 2nd rotation, Earthquake, Syria (1 Month) • Health Coordinator, Earthquake, Syria (1 Month) <p>IFRC Europe</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Manager, Earthquake, Syria (based in Lebanon) (3 Months) • Security Coordinator, Earthquake, Syria (3 Months) • PMER Coordinator, Earthquake, Syria (3 Months) <p>IFRC MENA</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Officer, 2nd rotation, Earthquake, Syria (1 Month) • PMER Coordinator, 2nd rotation, Earthquake, Syria (1 Month) <p>Lebanese Red Cross</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Logistics Officer, Earthquake, Syria (2 Months) <p>Norwegian Red Cross</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter Coordinator, Earthquake, Syria (2 Months) <p>Swiss Red Cross</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Emergency Operations, Earthquake, Syria (1 Month) <p>The Canadian Red Cross Society</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMER Officer, Earthquake, Syria (3 Months) <p>The Netherlands Red Cross</p> 

Deployments through IFRC Global Surge Mechanism

Security and Safety

As part of Duty of Care in Safety and Security, a separate set of Minimum-security requirements document for Lattakia was established solely for the earthquake operations. Contingency plans are in place and this includes the medical evacuation plan, relocation plan and risk register for Lattakia. In addition to that the Security Delegate for Syria together with the SARC Security Focal point closely monitor the security situation at national and regional level. The wellbeing and safety of SARC staff and volunteers also remains a priority. IFRC drivers have been trained in the use of Armored vehicles. Field assessments were carried out to assess the conditions of roads in areas affected by the earthquake. Risk assessments were carried out for hotels in Lattakia prior to staff residing in them as the earthquakes and aftershocks to determine they were in condition for staff to reside in as infrastructure has been negatively impacted by the tremors.

Resource Mobilization

The main accomplishments have been:

- IFRC Strategic Partnerships and Resource Mobilization colleagues have been working on grant management with SARC ensuring smooth communication with donor, compliance with donor requirements and providing technical support to IFRC teams.
- Support SARC in identifying and developing of project proposals.
- Develop a resource mobilization strategy and donors mapping to ensure outreach to Movement and non-Movement partners to seek financial support for the Appeal.
- Initiate and lead on developing the resource development and sustainability strategy exercise for SARC.

- Fundraising and Engagement with External Partners
- Interested donors and external partners, including RCRC National Societies, governments, the private sector, and other humanitarian organizations, have been solicited to bring together resources and expertise under the launched Emergency Appeal. The engagement has been ongoing and continues to generate interest and buy-in from stakeholders to commit funding toward critical components of the SARC response plan.
- Joint Syria and Turkey Partners Call and Permanent Missions Briefing in Geneva were held in February 2023 to launch the Emergency Appeal and seek support. A Private Sector update was organized in April 2023 to provide an overview of the situation and the ongoing operation. To discuss the needs for recovery and resilience building in Turkey and Syria following the earthquake, a recovery conference was organized in April for the IFRC network and a briefing on the same topic was held for the Permanent Mission in Geneva.

Logistics and Procurement

Since the beginning of the earthquake response, SARC has received shipments via air, road and sea, including cargo on 322 planes from various components of the international community to 21 warehouses used for the response. SARC has provided more than 5,000 logistics services including transportation of relief items through its own truck fleet or commercial companies. IFRC supported SARC with liquidity to run the operations from the DREF Loan granted immediately after the earthquake, essential in mobilizing the logistics resources for the receipt, warehousing (renting of warehouse facilities and rub halls) and movement of relief items to where they were needed the most.

In the continuous aftermath of the earthquake IFRC Global Humanitarian Services and Supply Chain management (GHS&SCM) operations and the IFRC country delegation team supported SARC supply chain efforts. Several initiatives have been undertaken to provide ongoing assistance to logistics and procurement within the IFRC country delegation team, further reinforcing support for SARC's supply chain endeavors. A collaborative effort involving SARC, GRC, and IFRC resulted in the organization of a customs clearance workshop in Latakia from October 22 to October 24, 2023 and additionally in the upcoming assessment of the internal workshop for vehicles' maintenance. IFRC has partnered with PNSs to coordinate the procurement and delivery of In-Kind Donations (IKDs) to Syria, leveraging SARC's infrastructure for diverse procurement activities. Several warehouse visits were scheduled across various locations within Syria. On desk support and capacity building to facilitate multiple procurement activities across multiple donors and PNSs. Vendor prequalification plan has been discussed and expected to be launched in 2024.

Communications

Since the earthquake struck, SARC and IFRC have continued working together on ensuring the communities have receive regular updates on [the humanitarian response](#), highlight [the needs](#) and showcase [the aid distribution](#) through social media, media, and other communications channels. March 2023 marked 12 years since the start of the Syrian crisis. Both [SARC](#) and [IFRC](#) published content showing how the earthquake is a crisis on top of a crisis.

From 15 to 18 February, Jagan Chapagain, IFRC's Secretary General, visited the massive earthquake response operation in Syria. During his visit, Mr. Chapagain met with Syrian Arab Red Crescent teams, volunteers and leadership, who are at the very heart of this response. In the aftermath of this visit, the IFRC MENA communications unit organized a press briefing for the Secretary at the International Airport of Beirut, it went live on Al Jazeera. It generated a lot of media coverage (International, regional and local), and the SG gave three exclusive interviews to Associated [Press](#), MTV Lebanon, Al Maydeen tv etc. In parallel, the regional office has occupied the media space in collaboration with the global communications team in Geneva. We had 5 spokespersons from the region in English, Arabic, Italian, and Spanish. The average number of media interviews given daily during February and Mid-March was 7(The regional [director](#), head of communications, Head of HDCC etc. More than 100 in total, CNN, France 24, BBC, AFP, New York times, sky news, etc.)

Earthquake Response Key Messages have been developed and updated regularly. SARC Media and Communication Unit continues to support branch communications teams in the affected areas for content production. IFRC deployed a Communications Coordinator to support SARC, IFRC, and Movement Partners on communications, providing capacity-building and enhancing the coordination of communications. IFRC Communications Coordinator provided support both at the SARC headquarters as well as at the branches. IFRC has continued sharing content, produced by SARC, with the partners to be distributed and used in their [respective markets](#).

IFRC, together with SARC, has been disseminating key messages and audio-visual content developed for the earthquake response operation with international partners and through IFRC communications channels to support the fundraising for the Emergency Appeal. IFRC has also been promoting messages in the international media to highlight the humanitarian needs in Syria.

More than 100 social media posts were shared on IFRC MENA platforms, and a web story at IFRC.org showcasing the work of SARC, IFRC and NSs, and Op-ed [on Al Jazeera English website](#). Over 60 k media and social media mentions of the IFRC/ICRC/Red Cross /Red Crescentcentd to the earthquake, between 6 and 14 February.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER)

Since the earthquake struck, the Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) unit at the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) together with the IFRC Syria Delegation PMER has been making significant progress toward strengthening the MEAL/PMER component of the response. The team played a key role in supporting the operations team in designing the earthquake response plan. The MEAL unit took the lead in preparing the revised plan which brought together 130 SARC staff and volunteers, along with over 15 partners. The PMER team facilitated the revision of the earthquake appeal SMART indicators with each sector lead and the development of the MEAL logical frameworks, and Indicator Tracking Tools (ITT). The team has also been instrumental in the development of data collection tools used for PDMs, satisfaction surveys and monitoring in close collaboration with the IM unit. The team has also been working to ensure that monthly reports, operations updates are produced, and donor reports are submitted in line with the contractual agreements to strengthen accountability. The MEAL unit conducted field visits to ensure the following objectives: 1) Gain an understanding of the ongoing activities at the branch, encompassing both response and MEAL initiatives, 2) Engage in discussions regarding capacity and recruitment, addressing identified training needs priorities, 3) Evaluate equipment requirements and other pertinent considerations during these visits. The IFRC PMER at the IFRC delegation will continue to offer support to the MEAL team to ensure that the MEAL component of the appeal is strengthened.

Information Management (IM)

Since the earthquake struck, the Information Management (IM) unit has been working to collect, analyze, and disseminate critical data to enhance the response efforts

Unified Data Collection tools: The IM unit has been at the forefront of collecting response data from all sectors and departments at the headquarters. They have worked diligently to ensure that all relevant information is gathered and documented for analysis.

Infographic Reports: In both Arabic and English, the IM unit has been developing infographic reports with monthly updates on SARC's response. These visually appealing reports provide stakeholders with a quick and clear understanding of their activities.

Developed a QR scanner to support the distributions. This was made with the aim of managing and tracking items in various distribution processes.



Federation-wide reporting: Standard Indicators are being aligned to SARC’s response plan. IFRC PMER team has coordinated with each sector focal point to provide global indicators for Federation-wide reporting. Achievements against the indicator values will be collected on a regular basis to report on the Emergency Appeal and SARC’s response plan. A Reporting schedule will be established to provide Operations Updates as per our standard reporting procedures. SARC Performance and Partnership Department is producing Monthly updates to share the latest achievements in the operation with all partners. Donor reporting will be monitored to ensure timely reporting.

D. FUNDING

By the end of October, 59 percent (which includes hard, soft, and in-kind contributions) of the Appeal’s multilateral funding requirements has been covered. The IFRC kindly encourages increased donor support for this Emergency Appeal to allow the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to continue to provide support to the immediate and mid-to-long-term needs of the earthquake-affected populations through cash and voucher assistance, food security interventions, shelter, and health.

[Click here for the donor response](#) (only reflects hard and in-kind contributions).

Contact information

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

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For PMER support (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting inquiries)

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IFRC Geneva:

- Rika UENO HARADA, Operations Coordination Senior Officer, email: rika.harada@ifrc.org, phone +81 90 3719 6570

For In-Kind Donations and Mobilization table support:

- Global Logistics Services - Goran BOLJANOVIC, Head of Unit, Global Humanitarian Services & Supply Chain Management (GHS & SCM), MENA, email goran.boljanovic@ifrc.org, phone +36 20 453 6960

Reference documents



Click here for:

- Revised Emergency [Appeals](#) and updates
- [Operational Strategy](#)
- [Ops Update #1](#)

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.