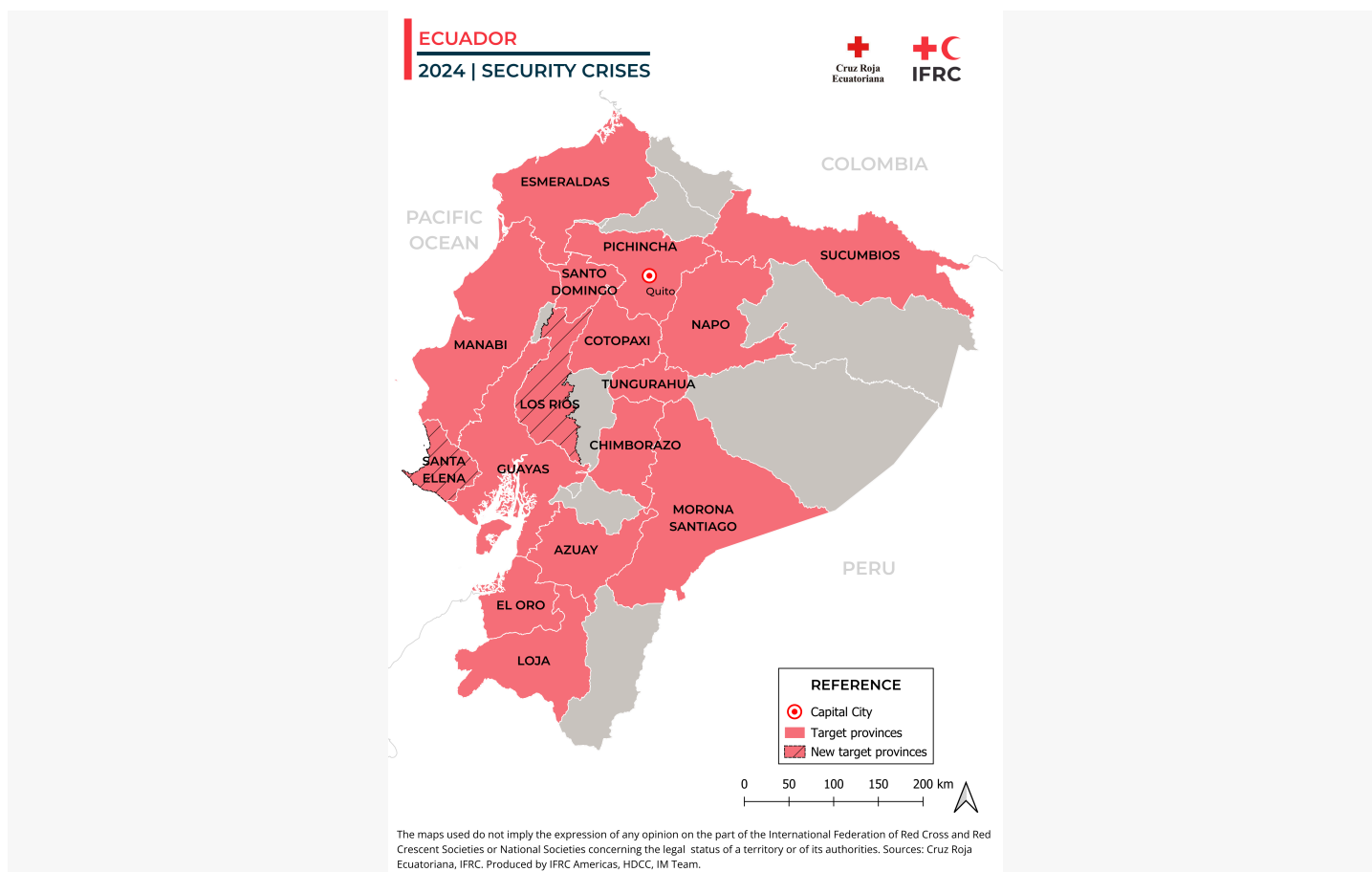




Awareness-raising on restoring family links, Napo province. February 2024. Source: ERC.

Appeal: MDREC025	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 218,956	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Other
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 0 people	People Targeted: 4,500 people	
Event Onset: Slow	Operation Start Date: 23-01-2024	New Operational End Date: 31-07-2024	Total Operating Timeframe: 6 months
Reporting Timeframe Start Date: 23-01-2024		Reporting Timeframe End Date: 30-04-2024	
Additional Allocation Requested: 0		Targeted Areas: Azuay, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Loja, Los Rios, Manabi, Morona Santiago, Napo, Pastaza, Pichincha, Tungurahua, Sucumbios, Santo Domingo de Los Tsachilas, Santa Elena	

Description of the Event



New target Provinces, May 2024.

Date when the trigger was met

08-01-2024

What happened, where and when?

Since 2021, Ecuador has seen a systematic increase in criminal violence generated by Organized Criminal Groups (OCGs) over territorial disputes linked to transnational drug trafficking. The rise in violence has led Ecuador to lead the list of South American countries with the highest number of violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, rising in a single year from 25 to 42 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, closing one of the most violent years in its history (1)

The increase in violence associated with drug trafficking during 2023 was compounded by a series of simultaneous riots in the different Centre for Social Rehabilitation (CSR) in the country, resulting in 79 deaths in the cities of Cuenca, Guayaquil, and Latacunga. The events in what was later called a Prison Crisis by the National Government led to increased control operations within the prison system by the National Service of Integral Attention to Adults Deprived of Liberty and Adolescent Offenders (SNAI).

On 7 January 2024, the Armed Forces and the National Police carried out an operation in the regional CSR of Guayaquil to transfer the leader of one of the main organized crime groups (GDO) to a maximum security prison. After the operation, the state attorney general informed the authorities of his disappearance. As a result, the Public Security and State Council (COSEPE) convened an urgent meeting to discuss issues related to the country's internal security.

On 8 January at approximately 08:00, riots were reported in different CSRs of the country located in the provinces of Guayas, Cotopaxi, Azuay, Cañar, Loja, Napo, Chimborazo, El Oro, Tungurahua and Pichincha. According to the National government data, during this day, correctional officers and administrative personnel were reported to have been retained inside the facilities; therefore, specialized teams of the National Police and the Armed Forces carried out operations with the purpose of recovering control in the different detention centers. On the same day, the President of Ecuador issued an Executive Decree No. 110 (2) declaring a State of Exception (SoE) due to internal severe commotion for 60 days throughout the national territory, restricting the rights of freedom of transit, freedom of



assembly, inviolability of domicile and inviolability of correspondence; as well as providing for the mobilization and intervention of the National Police and the Armed Forces throughout the country.

Between the night of 8 January and the afternoon of 9 January, public authorities recorded several violent situations in the provinces of Pichincha, Esmeraldas, Azuay, El Oro, Chimborazo, Loja, Guayas and Los Ríos, the main ones being explosion of car bombs, detonation of explosive devices, incinerated vehicles, kidnappings and retention of police officers and public and private servants, attempts to take over public and private spaces (barracks, shopping centers, universities, media outlets, hospitals), among others.

These incidents, broadcast live and disseminated on social networks, caused alert and fear in the civilian population as they had not experienced before a succession of situations of such intensity and visibility, in addition to the series of scenes of violence and the uncertainty regarding family security, transportation, food supply, fuel, and other essential supplies caused the population to enter into a state of collective stress.

On 9 January, the President of Ecuador issued Executive Decree No. 111 (3) mentioning the existence of an internal armed conflict, identifying 22 GDOs as "terrorist organizations and belligerent non-state actors", and ordering the Armed Forces to execute military operations to neutralize them. In the area of migration, on 9 January, the Peruvian Government declared a State of Emergency in the border with Ecuador in the regions of Tumbes, Piura, Cajamarca, Amazonas, and Loreto, increasing border controls by the Peruvian National Police, in addition to the suspension of international passenger transportation between Tumbes (Peru) and Huaquillas Ecuador (4).

On 11 January, through Ministerial Agreement 007, the Ministry of the Interior ordered the requirement of a Criminal Record Certificate for foreigners seeking to enter through the land borders with Colombia and Peru (5). These measures make it more challenging to migrate by land, especially for the Venezuelan and Colombian populations, but also for other nationalities, as it may generate an increase in the use of irregular crossings or trails by migrants, increasing the risks of being victims of various forms of violence and violation of rights, such as robberies, extortion, human trafficking, disappearance, recruitment of adolescents and young people to the Organized Crime Groups. The National Government linked the lifespan of this measure to the State of Exception.

According to the latest Government report, of the total number of joint operations carried out, 160 have been directed against various groups classified as "terrorists", with the following results: 8 people killed and identified as members of belligerent groups, the arrest of 9,473 people, 241 of them under the charge of "terrorism"; as well as the recapture of 34 persons deprived of their freedom who escaped from social rehabilitation centers at the beginning of the year, which was one of the triggers for the declaration of the state of emergency.

According to a report from the Ministry of Interior, from January to March, extortions and kidnappings increased. Extortion payments have doubled and from January to March 2024 there have been 38 kidnappings. Most occurred in Guayaquil, according to police figures, considered the most violent city in the country. The executive decree 193, issued on 7 March of this year indicates the extension of the state of emergency for 30 more days, a period that ended on 6 April 2024. Added to this, on 15 March, the Government mentioned that the Value Added Tax (VAT) would increase from 12 to 15%, in order to undertake responsible economic actions to face the internal security crisis, energy cuts and, in this way, guarantee revenues that contribute to the sustainability of public finances. Thus, since 1 April, this measure was applied after the approval of the tax reform.

Later, on 19 April, the Government of Ecuador, through Executive Decree N 229, established a new state of exception for serious internal commotion and public calamity, due to the emergency in the electricity sector for the entire Ecuadorian territory, with a duration of 60 days. This implied the mobilization and intervention of the Police and Armed Forces throughout the national territory to guarantee the security of critical energy infrastructure facilities, in order to prevent sabotage, terrorist attacks or other threats that may affect the operation of hydroelectric plants. Thus, since 15 April 2024, the Ecuadorian Government has implemented programmed power outages throughout the country, meaning that in some sectors the outages last up to nine hours. The declaration of a state of emergency occurred two days before Ecuadorians voted in the popular consultation and referendum process of 21 April 2024. The emergency in the electric sector additionally implied the mobilization of the Armed Forces and national police to prevent serious attacks or incidents in this strategic sector for the Ecuadorian State. However, the Minister of Energy of Ecuador, Roberto Luque, stated that the power cuts will be extended until May, although the situation is still delicate, since the hydroelectric plants are not yet operating at their full capacity.

Through Executive Decree No. 250 of 30 April 2024, the President of the Republic declared a state of emergency in the provinces of Oro, Guayas, Los Ríos, Manabí and Santa Elena, stating the persistence of the internal armed conflict, effective for 60 days and restricting the right to the inviolability of the home, permitting the mobilization of the Armed Forces and the National Police. In the first day of the state of exception in the city of Manta, province of Manabí, six violent deaths in different circumstances were reported, reportedly linked to clashes between criminal organizations Los Lobos and Los Choneros, who are fighting for control of drug trafficking in this coastal area. On 11 May, Ecuador's Constitutional Court issued a declaration of unconstitutionality of this Decree.

As a measure to continue fighting drug trafficking, on 2 May, Ecuador's National Assembly approved the Organic Law for the Control of National Airspace, a law that strengthens the supervision and control of airspace, especially focused on the fight against drug trafficking.



On 22 May, the government issued Executive Decree N°275, which declared a state of emergency on the grounds of internal armed conflict, for a period of 60 days, exclusively in the provinces of Guayas, El Oro, Santa Elena, Manabí, Sucumbíos, Orellana, Los Ríos and the canton of Camilo Ponce Enríquez in the province of Azuay.



Restoring Family Links sensitization, El Oro, April 2024.

Scope and Scale

According to information from the Ministry of Interior, during the first two days of implementation of the SoE, 8 controlled explosive devices, 15 Molotov cocktails, 9 firearms, 38 cartridges, 6 motorcycles and 6 vehicles have been impounded. According to the National Government, 11 people have died due to violence in the streets, eight of them in Guayas and three in Esmeraldas. The main events have occurred as follows:

- In Guayaquil, considered the epicenter of violence and the country's second-largest city, robberies, looting, and shootings have been reported in commercial areas.
- Lootings have been recorded in the historic center of Quito, Ambato, and a shopping mall in Machala.
- Shootings have been reported in several prisons in Santo Domingo, Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, Cuenca, and Machala, threatening the security and integrity of the surrounding communities.
- Car bombs have been reported at various points in the cities of Quito, Guayaquil, Esmeraldas, and Ibarra, among others.

In general, the effects recorded on property and infrastructure at the national level are as follows:

- 7 pedestrian bridges
- 12 Community Police Units (UPC)
- 12 car bombs
- 9 vehicles incinerated
- 23 explosions in different parts of the country.
- 1 media affected

The evolution of the events has resulted in the following consequences:

In the health sector, the Ministry of Health has suspended outpatient services in health centers and hospitals nationwide, as well as planned surgeries, with only emergency services available. Among the different consequences resulting from a rapid increase of violence



beyond immediate care for the injured would be the suspension of extramural activities and the closure of level first and second-level structures, meaning a lack of access to essential health services, including assistance to non-conflict emergencies, especially for populations at greatest risk.

In the education sector, the Ministry of Education suspended attendance in educational institutions at the national level in response to the increase in the number of attacks. Communications by institutions responsible for the protection of children and adolescents and gender-based violence followed the measures taken by the Government calling to activate referral mechanisms and reporting channels in situations of domestic violence and gender-based violence within homes. According to the Annual Report of Educational Statistics in Ecuador, 4.3 million students are enrolled in Ecuador's national education system at preschool, school, primary education, high school, and education levels in municipal, private, private, and public institutions.

In the economic sphere, thousands of families who depended on commerce and informal work were forced to close their businesses. On the other hand, the Ministry of Labor ordered public and private entities to adopt the modality of teleworking for two days. These measures, together with mobility restrictions, have momentarily generated a context already experienced during the quarantine during COVID-19. According to this experience, the rates of domestic and gender-based violence are expected to increase.

In addition, the President of the Republic ratified on 11 January a bill called Organic Law to address the current context of violence and the social and economic crisis to the National Assembly, asking for an increase in VAT from 12% to 15%, which indigenous organizations and workers' unions have opposed (6). It is important to note, that in the past, many of the social protests (sometimes violent) had been triggered by economic issues, including price increases.

Finally, the national Government announced the construction of two detention centers in the provinces of Pastaza and Santa Elena. In Pastaza, this has led to a strong rejection by the local population and indigenous communities in the area, a rejection to which the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE), the main social organization within the social demonstrations of 2019 and 2022, has joined.

Based on the analysis carried out by the Ecuadorian Red Cross according to the information collected by its Emergency Operations Room and its participation in the different Governments Emergency Operations Centers at the national and provincial levels, there are growing concerns about an increase in the manifestations of violence at national level and in particular in the provinces of Guayas, Pichincha, Azuay, Esmeraldas, Manabí, Loja, Napo, Chimborazo, Tungurahua, Cotopaxi and El Oro where the highest number of violent manifestations were reported since the declaration of the SoE.

The emergency has meant a paralysis of the daily activities of the population, but it has also had repercussions on the levels and loss of livelihoods. On 25 February, CID Gallup conducted a survey of the Latin American region on the subject of robbery or assault, placing Ecuador in first place, registering that 47% of Ecuadorians suffered some type of robbery or assault in the last four months. These figures seem to be sustained over the course of the year. According to the Integrated Security Service report, over the weekend of May 3-5, more than 30,000 cases were attended through its ECU-911 line, with 69% (20,676) of the calls concerning citizen security. Also, as a result of the crisis and the approval of the VAT increase, 208 products of the basic basket of goods and services showed new prices. As for food, 21 of the 115 items included in this list increased with the new tax. On the other hand, the cost of buying household goods and appliances also changed with the new tax measure. Likewise, some fuels also increased. The gallon of Extra and Ecopaís gasoline increased around USD 0.07 per gallon, which has also influenced the increase in food prices due to their transportation.

Accordingly, the National Society identifies the need to establish preparedness measures for volunteers and technical teams at the national level and in the 24 Provincial Branches to face a scenario of violence and conflict unprecedented in Ecuador's recent history. The National Society has decided to launch this operation for the implementation of preparedness and response measures based on the evolution of the situation and its commitment to address the emerging humanitarian needs in the current context in a timely manner.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Ministerial Agreement No. 007	https://www.fielweb.com/App_Themes/Informacion/Interes/ac007inte.pdf
2. El Universo:	https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/economia/umento-del-iva-en-ecuador-desde-cuando-estaria-vigente-el-incremento-del-15-nota/
3. The New York Times:	https://www.nytimes.com/es/2024/01/09/espanol/violencia-guayaquil-ecuador.html



4. Executive Decree No. 110	https://www.eldiario.ec/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Decreto Ejecutivo No. 110_20240008162821_20240008162829.pdf
5. El Universo:	https://bit.ly/493F8iq
6. Info Bae:	https://www.infobae.com/peru/2024/01/10/violencia-en-ecuador-suspenden-servicios-de-transporte-en-frontera-con-tumbes-por-crisis-en-pais-vecino/
7. La Razón Perú:	https://larazon.pe/ff-aa-y-pnp-en-pie-de-lucha-por-aumento-de-sueldos-y-pensiones/
8. Al Jazeera:	https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/14/ecuador-prison-staff-held-hostage-by-inmates-all-freed?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email
9. Infobae	https://www.infobae.com/america/america-latina/2024/05/03/ecuador-aprobo-una-ley-para-que-otorga-mas-poder-a-la-fuerza-aerea-en-la-lucha-contra-el-narcotrafico/
10. CNN	https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2024/05/22/noboa-nuevo-estado-de-excepcion-segunda-fase-lucha-narcoterrorismo-orix/

Summary of Changes

Are you changing the timeframe of the operation	Yes
Are you changing the operational strategy	Yes
Are you changing the target population of the operation	No
Are you changing the geographical location	Yes
Are you making changes to the budget	Yes
Is this a request for a second allocation	No
Has the forecasted event materialize?	Yes

Please explain the summary of changes and justification:

On 23 January 2024, the implementation of the IFRC-DREF MDRECO25 - Ecuador Security Crisis began in 15 Provinces of Ecuador. At the time of the presentation of this operational update, the Ecuadorian Red Cross has achieved 100% compliance with the planned operational strategy. However, as a result of the exchange rate differential, due to the contribution of the Spanish Red Cross that covered the deployment of the rapid response personnel planned for the operation and savings in different budget lines, there is an uninvested surplus that is proposed to be used in addressing emerging humanitarian and operational needs, considering a two-month extension to implement the following activities:

I. Expansion of areas to strengthen the telecommunications network of the Ecuadorian Red Cross:

As a result of the declaration of a state of emergency on 30 April in the provinces of Los Ríos, Manabí, Santa Elena, Guayas, and El Oro, due to the increase of violence, the importance of extending the assessment and maintenance process of the telecommunications network in the provinces of Santa Elena and Los Ríos, that were not included in the initial planning, was evident. For this purpose, 15,000 CHF from Secretariat Services (Surge - IT & Telecommunications Specialist) will be transferred to NSD to support the consultancy in completing the assessment and repairs of the telecommunications network.



II. Implement an assessment and context analysis of the main humanitarian consequences of the security situation in the country:

In view of the increase of violence in the different territories and the lack of information for decision-making on that matter, the development of a context analysis exercise is contemplated in order to identify the main humanitarian impact of the increase of violence in communities based on the information available in the provinces with the highest rates of violence recorded. For this activity, 8,000 CHF will be reallocated from savings in different accounts to the CEA line to conduct the assessment at prioritized provinces.

Current National Society Actions

Start date of National Society actions

09-01-2024

Health	The ERC conducted health activities focusing on pre-hospital care, mental health, and voluntary blood donation. ERC provided pre-hospital care to 2,896 individuals during security crises, with a focus on trauma injuries and clinical emergencies. Additionally, the National Society trained 87 staff and volunteers in pre-hospital care. In mental health, ERC trained volunteer personnel, delivered support kits, and provided services to 1,717 individuals across 15 provinces, including MHPSS, to the staff of the Service of Integral Attention to Adults Deprived of Liberty and Adolescent Offenders (SNAI) in Azuay. Lastly, ERC implemented strategies to increase voluntary blood donations, collecting 3,648 units by April and reaching a wide audience through awareness campaigns.
Protection, Gender And Inclusion	The ERC produced various audiovisual and radio materials, including educational videos for crisis situations with children and awareness-raising spots on gender-based violence. These were disseminated through national radio stations and community radios, reaching a total of 427,640 people. Additionally, a virtual workshop was conducted to reinforce the approach to humanitarian assistance, with 123 participants.
Migration And Displacement	Restoring Family Links (RFL) - Regarding the scenario, guidelines, and services to be applied in this context were issued to the Provincial Branches. - The RFL team in the territorial network was alerted for activation if required. - With the objective of strengthening 15 points of temporary care centers established in 13 provinces according to the level of capacity and response after analysis of the RFL line, the distribution of equipment was carried out prior to the services deployed by each focal point in the territories. As part of the sensitization of the external public, videos with key messages to prevent the rupture of family links were disseminated, as well as the adaptation of these messages in indigenous and sign languages, applying a cross-cutting approach of inclusion.
Coordination	- Direct contact has been maintained with the Provincial Coordinating Offices of the operational programs to identify capabilities and define personnel that can be activated when required. - The Provincial Branches and National Headquarters maintain constant communication and presence in inter-institutional coordination spaces at different levels: Ministry of Public Health, Health Secretariats of the Decentralized Autonomous Governments, and Unified Command Posts, among others.
Assessment	The National Society, due to its regular activities and in operations due to natural or anthropic disasters, must guarantee that its radio communication system is enabled and operative during all its institutional activities. From the National Headquarters, a problem was identified regarding radio communications in several Provincial Branches. This caused that, when traveling in the field, there is no constant communication either with the Board or with the National Headquarters. The institution has two types of systems for intercommunication at the national level:



1. VHF (Very High Frequency), enabled in 22 provinces with repeater systems (except Galapagos and Los Rios), of which 12 are connected by fiber optics with the National Headquarters and 10 work locally or are linked through nearby provinces for interconnection.

2. HF (High Frequency), enabled in 13 Provincial Boards and the National Headquarters: Carchi, Imbabura, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Bolivar, Azuay, Guayas, El Oro, Los Rios, Pastaza, Santo Domingo and Esmeraldas.

To make a diagnosis of the situation of the national telecommunications system, the ERC requested the support of the IFRC through the support of a telecommunications specialist, in Surge modality, to evaluate the national telecommunications system of the National Society, from 21 February to 12 April. The results obtained were based on information gathered during on-site visits to the Provincial Boards of: Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Esmeraldas, Manabí, Guayas, Los Ríos, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Pastaza and Napo, in addition to those mentioned a virtual validation was performed with the rest of the provinces. After this validation it was possible to determine the following:

- The ERC has had an operational radio network for decades, used disproportionately and with different criteria in the different provinces. Over time, the use of the network has decreased in almost all provinces and nowadays, cell phones are the main telecommunications connection tool in many of them, leaving the radio as a backup communications system.

- Currently, most provinces use the radio network during their operations and emergency response activities. In others, such as Guayas and Tungurahua, the radio network is constantly used to monitor the movement of ambulances and in certain movements of their logistical vehicles. However, in cases such as Pastaza and Napo, it is used on an ad hoc basis in emergency response and is not used in operations.

Other points to take into account are the following:

1. Currently, the institutional guideline for the use of the telecommunications network is not being complied with.

2. Most of the Provincial Branches do not use of the radio communication system. This is due, in some cases, to the lack of Telecom area managers, and, in others, to the limited availability of equipment, which hinders the development of local activities and the interconnection with the National Headquarters. On the other hand, most of the Provincial Branches that do have such equipment use analog technology that has been in use for several years. This situation conditions communication during the activities of the territorial network.

3. In general, there are several limitations to globalizing the radio connection in the country. These limitations include the various geographical distances, topographical barriers, few trained personnel in the territorial network and the high cost of radio communication equipment.

National Society EOC

- At the beginning of the project, the installation of a national crisis room led by the National Presidency and the General Secretariat was considered relevant. As well as at the local level in the provinces of Azuay, Imbabura, Pichincha and Guayas. Since the formation of this roundtable in January, no other analysis roundtable has been set up with the governing bodies of the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

- The Information Management and Analysis of Adverse Events area monitors the current situation through official sources in order to gather information and prepare Executive Summaries in accordance with the evolution of events.

- The project coordination team has held regular meetings since the beginning of the project in order to follow up on the administrative and operational processes from Headquarters.

Other

Crisis communication

- The ERC Communication department organized the Publication of key messages through social networks regarding the auxiliary role of the Red Cross, respect for the



emblem, and Fundamental Principles.

- Contact was maintained with the communication focal points of the Provincial Branches.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	<p>The IFRC Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) for Andean Countries based in Lima covers Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. The CCD maintains a close relationship and coordination with the National Society. Additionally, permanent communication is maintained with the different levels of the IFRC, who have made their financial and technical support available to the National Society for planning, execution, and reporting, if required.</p>
Participating National Societies	<p>Permanent communication is maintained with several Participating National Societies (Norway, Spain) who have made their technical and financial support available to the National Society, if required.</p> <p>Within the framework of the implementation of the Pilot Programmatic Partnership (PPP) with funds from the European Commission, actions are currently being developed to respond to the humanitarian needs of the migrant population in the northern and southern border cities through Humanitarian Service Points (HSP). In the event of identifying an increase in outflows or inflows of population, the Ecuadorian Red Cross has enough institutional resources for an initial response through this program.</p> <p>Likewise, the Ecuadorian Red Cross plans to strengthen the Emergency Operations Rooms of the monitoring room network within the PPP. During the first months of operation, the National Society will evaluate with Movement Partners to accelerate the implementation of these funds within the framework of the current operation looking for complementarity with the IFRC-DREF funds.</p>

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

Ongoing communication is maintained with the ICRC, which has made its financial and technical support available to the National Society as required, particularly in security management within the Safer Access Framework.

As part of the cooperation agreement, the ICRC will continue to provide technical and financial support to the implementation of ERC's Security Policy, as well as to initiatives to increase the respect of medical mission (health care in danger) and advising in crisis communication, IHL and applicable legal framework. Likewise, the operation of RFL points along the migratory route (border, transit, and destination cities) will continue.

The ICRC continues to monitor the humanitarian consequences of the evolving situation and, in the framework of its bilateral and confidential dialogue, to share its concerns with Ecuadorean authorities, particularly for persons deprived of their liberty.

Since the beginning of this operation, the Ecuadorian Red Cross has held follow-up meetings to monitor the activities carried out under the project. Meetings have also been held with various government ministries, such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, in order to learn about the status and effects of Executive Decrees 111 and 112.

In relation to the service of restoring family links, under the Cooperation Agreement between the ERC and the ICRC, the National Society proceeded to the prepositioning of RFL emergency kits, dissemination materials (rolled up) and preventive measures material, such as diptych cards and information materials. These products contain self-care messages or recommendations to be implemented in order to prevent the rupture of family links in different contexts.



Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	Yes
National authorities	<p>On 7 April, the National Government mentioned the persistence of an "internal armed conflict in the country" through Executive Decree 218, for which the Government indicated:</p> <p>To the Armed Forces: Execute military operations to "prevent and eradicate the activity of organized armed groups in the national territory".</p> <p>To the Police and the Armed Forces: To continue with the operational and tactical deployment required to neutralize armed attacks, threats or risks orchestrated by organized crime, organized armed groups or terrorists. It also provided for the necessary coordination to establish a multi-year budget for internal security, strategic intelligence and counterintelligence systems, among others.</p> <p>Among other actions taken by the National Government, the presentation of the Foreign Minister, Gabriela Sommerfeld, at a UN hearing in Vienna on 15 March, in which she reiterated that the presidential measures have contributed to reduce violent deaths, stands out. In this regard, Sommerfeld emphasized his government's commitment to the rule of law and democracy and stressed that the measures to "restore peace and security" are not only effective but have popular support.</p>
UN or other actors	<p>The United Nations Agency issued a statement urging Ecuador to resolve the conflict within the framework of the law, in full compliance with and respect for human rights.</p> <p>The international community showed its support to the National Government. The Head of State highlighted he met with the Ambassador of the United States of America, Michael Fitzpatrick, for the US to send an assistance package. Assistance will also be received from Argentina, Israel, Peru, Canada, and Russia.</p>

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

The Ecuadorian Red Cross actively participates in the national and local coordination spaces within the Decentralized National Risk Management System in the provinces where Emergency Operations Centers or Unified Command Posts have been established. However, it is important to point out that CRE does not lead or co-lead any of these spaces. This also applies to working groups on human mobility and prevention of serious crimes against human life, which aim to prevent any collateral event that may be affected by the context of violence that the country is going through.

On the other hand, the Armed Forces have received 4 training requests from the Ecuadorian Red Cross in the provinces of Morona Santiago, Sucumbíos, Esmeraldas and Imbabura on topics related to International Humanitarian Law.

In addition, inter-institutional coordination has been carried out with the Ministry of Public Health in the coordination of pre-hospital care and requests for ambulance deployment by the Ecuadorian Red Cross. Joint collaboration has been maintained with this State institution in relation to voluntary blood donation.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Pre-hospital Care (PHC)

The first link in the emergency care chain is the Emergency Medical Services. The emergency regulatory centers coordinate the dispatch of ambulances to attend to people affected by an injury or symptomatology after a telephone call has been made. In the context of emergencies linked with armed conflicts and other situations of violence, emergency care service corresponds to patients with multisystem trauma (injuries affecting more than one system, for example, pulmonary, circulatory, neurological, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, and integumentary).



Injuries can be produced by penetrating type traumas produced by bladed weapons (knives, daggers) or firearms, affecting vital organs, being necessary and adequate management from the scene to the hospital emergency room. The closure of hospitals and health centers, whether due to threats of explosive devices or blocked access routes, may necessitate the transfer of patients to more distant health centers with potentially lower capacity. Ambulances equipped with appropriate materials, biomedical equipment, supplies, and devices for primary and advanced life support are essential for maintaining patient stability during these extended transfers.

The ambulance becomes a provisional emergency room considering the saturation of medical assistance centers, the lack of resolution capacity in small localities, and the dynamics of attacks with explosive material that force the partial closure of emergency rooms. Therefore, the ERC has identified the provision of ambulance services in preparation for a possible increase in violence as one of the immediate needs in this operation.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

The internal security crisis affects the psychosocial dimension of individuals, families, and the community, which is why the population is affected at the psychological level for various reasons such as fear due to explosions and detonations, anxiety and anguish due to violent deaths, assaults and kidnappings; panic due to the multiple violent events in different provinces of the country, stress and sleep problems due to the news that the traditional media and social networks present; abuse of psychoactive substances and self-medication as an inadequate form of coping. Likewise, social effects such as domestic violence endangering minors, women, older adults, and people with disabilities; economic problems due to the closure of businesses and looting of commercial premises; reduced mobility due to the SoE, among others. Humanitarian personnel, as members of the community, may also be affected; however, they also have other psychosocial effects due to high workload, anxiety, and difficulties in relationships among collaborators, among others.

Voluntary Blood Donation

The recent declaration of the SoE and the mentioning of conflict by the State can generate a significant impact on the operations of the ERC, marking a decrease in the number of blood donors, which has created a shortage that threatens the ability to meet the medical needs of the population. During the last quarter of 2023, the National Society recorded a progressive decrease in the number of blood donations at the national level, which has gone from reporting 23,194 donations in October to 20,362 donations in November (a decrease of 12.3%) and 18,003 donations in December (a decrease of 11.6%). In the current context, different provinces are facing a substantial increase in the demand for blood products, especially platelets, from hospitals affected by the violent situation. This combination of circumstances has created an urgent need to strengthen operations and ensure a constant supply of blood to save lives. It should be noted that the ERC has a National Blood Center that is considered the main supplier of blood components in the national health system. Although in the past, an average of 1,000 pints of blood were received daily, the first days of January 2024 showed a significant reduction, receiving approximately 600 donations per day.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

The country's current context has generated significant concern among the population. Governmental measures such as the State of Emergency (SoE), curfew, and references to internal armed conflict have created a new scenario in which all 24 provinces are affected by the fear of being victims of daily acts of violence perpetrated by Organized Criminal Groups (OCG) in various cities. The return to virtual classes and teleworking, while protecting a large part of the population, has also led to an increase in domestic violence, with women, children, adolescents, and older adults being the most affected, as reported by the ECU 911 System after the COVID-19 quarantine.

From the Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) approach, the Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) identified several key needs: the necessity for crucial information to better identify escalating alerts of domestic violence and gender-based violence (GBV); information on the procedures to follow in cases of domestic violence and GBV, even during states of emergency and mobility restrictions; and information on handling internal security crises or conflict scenarios involving children in family and school environments.

Furthermore, there is a need for disseminating information through various communication formats about the auxiliary role of the ERC. This includes mass messaging on fundamental principles, respect for the emblem, focus on priority attention groups, and awareness of gender-based violence situations. The spread of false information on social networks has increased uncertainty, emphasizing the need for effective communication and community feedback mechanisms. The identified needs highlight the importance of accurate information dissemination to mitigate the adverse effects of misinformation and ensure the safety and well-being of the population.





Migration And Displacement

Due to the occurrence of different social, natural and anthropic hazardous events, such as:

- Mass movements and floods.
- Electric power service deficit.
- Affectation of telephone service.
- Affectation to the internet service.
- Diversity of social upheaval events at the national level.
- Intermittent social manifestations.
- Migration from neighboring countries and migration of Ecuadorians to other countries.

The following situations were evidenced:

- Temporary loss of communication (for hours) and suspension of electric power.
- Not knowing the whereabouts of loved ones residing in areas affected by the security context or natural events.
- Loss of family contact among Ecuadorian, Venezuelan and Colombian migrants due to extensive travel and lack of means of communication (cell phones, internet access, mobile device batteries without sufficient charge).
- Lack of knowledge of family communication plans in the event of a hazardous event.
- Lack of knowledge of self-care measures on the part of children and adolescents to ensure permanent communication with their loved ones in the event of a dangerous event.
- Lack of information on the temporary or prolonged whereabouts of family members.
- Breakdown of family ties in migrant families in the northern and southern border provinces due to the measures taken by the State.

Additionally, the land borders with Peru and Colombia are controlled by the Armed Forces and Police of both States, which results in increased restrictions to enter or leave the country, prolonging their stay in vulnerable conditions, increasing the risk of losing family contact and facing situations of violence and human trafficking due to the increase in crossings through unauthorized entry points.



Community Engagement And Accountability

In the current context of the country, information plays a central role in the development of Ecuadorian Red Cross operations. The experience derived from the information circulated through social media during the first two days of the SoE indicates an increase in misinformation and dissemination of false messages about Red Cross activities. Therefore, it is necessary to have clear, honest, and timely communication and feedback mechanisms that allow the National Society to act accordingly and implement more effective actions, avoiding limiting the work of volunteers and humanitarian staff on the ground and continuing to aid those in need.

Listening to the population and hearing their opinions and suggestions will be vital to adjusting the operation on time, as well as detecting in time possible rumors that may affect the image of the Ecuadorian Red Cross, to design, disseminate, and reinforce in the community some key messages that clarify the auxiliary role of the ERC.

Other issues that emerge as the emergency progresses should also be collected through community listening and feedback exercises, such as drop boxes or social listening, which will gather information from the assisted population and the mainstream media. In this way, data will be collected to reinforce the image of the ERC and its Fundamental Principles and Supporting Role, as well as to incorporate measures to ensure that the voices of the communities are being heard, as well as the operational security of technical teams and volunteers in the current context.

CEA, being a cross-cutting approach to all humanitarian actions, is implemented continuously throughout the risk management cycle. Through the implementation of community feedback mechanisms, a critical need was identified: the urgency of having a comprehensive diagnosis to understand the magnitude of violence in the country. This diagnosis should address various aspects, including the situation in different geographic areas and the most affected vulnerable groups. Its objective will be to identify the underlying causes of violence as well as the associated risk factors, which is essential to know to guide the planning of specific and targeted interventions aimed at the most affected areas and groups.

Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

There is currently insufficient information regarding the security context in Ecuador. More comprehensive data is urgently required to make informed and effective decisions, both for the Ecuadorian Red Cross and its partners. This lack of reliable and up-to-date information makes it imperative to conduct a thorough assessment. Such an evaluation will aim to gather detailed insights into the prevailing security situation, identify the primary needs of the population, and ensure that responses are appropriately tailored to



address the most pressing concerns. Without this essential information, developing and implementing effective strategies becomes difficult.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Through this IFRC-DREF Operation, the Ecuadorian Red Cross initially aims to prepare the teams to provide timely and efficient care under the auxiliary role of the public authorities in the humanitarian field in the context of violence through the strengthening and evaluation of the capacities of the Provincial Branches in the lines of Health (Psychosocial support, pre-hospital care and blood donation), and Restoration of Family Links, ensuring the safety of staff and applying the cross-cutting approaches of Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA).

If the situation escalates, a response phase will be activated focusing on the implementation of the planned services to assist the population that requires it, ensuring the safety of personnel at all times. Through this intervention, the ERC plans to assist 4,500 people through pre-hospital care services, mental health, and psychosocial support, and key messages on gender-based violence and domestic violence. The total number of people to be reached is an estimate based on the capacities and projected needs identified at the territorial level. The 17 prioritized provinces and cantons for this operation include: Guayas (Guayaquil), Pichincha (Quito), Cotopaxi (Latacunga), Tungurahua (Ambato), Chimborazo (Riobamba), Sucumbíos (Lago Agrio), Pastaza (Puyo), Azuay (Cuenca), El Oro (Machala), Esmeraldas (Esmeraldas), Loja (Loja), Manabí (Portoviejo), Napo (Tena), Morona Santiago (Macas), Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas (Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas), Santa Elena and Los Rios. The cantons mentioned may vary according to the evolution of the event.

Operation strategy rationale

The strategy has been designed based on the experience of the Ecuadorian Red Cross facing civil unrest and situations of violence, which has involved different lines of institutional action and advocacy with the authorities and humanitarian stakeholders. As such, the operation is being proposed in two phases:

TRIGGER N° 1 - PREPAREDNESS PHASE:

Trigger No. 1 was activated with the issuance of Executive Decree No. 110 by the President of Ecuador, on 8 January, which declared the State of Exception (SoE) due to internal severe commotion. In this context of increased insecurity in the country, the National Society has prioritized preparedness actions, including equipping branches and capacity strengthening for staff and volunteers.

TRIGGER 2 - RESPONSE PHASE:

Trigger No. 2 will be activated in the event that the situation escalates (car bombs, explosions, civil unrest or attacks to hospitals or health care centers) and surpasses the capacity of Provincial branches after an internal process of analysis by the ERC. The strategy rationale for this phase involves six intervention areas and two support areas, as follows:

PRE-HOSPITAL CARE (PHC):

Based on good practices and lessons learned in social mobilizations and crises in Centres for Social Rehabilitation (CSR), the ERC implemented a training module for pre-hospital personnel on pre-hospital care in emergencies and the use of equipment in ambulances. It is necessary to reinforce the knowledge of staff and volunteers considering the rotation of specialists and adapt the experiences to the current context, including their training in operational security, self-protection, and risk assessment that will be covered through this operation.

In the current context, the technical team of the Ecuadorian Red Cross has identified the need to reinforce ambulance services at the national level and in the Provincial Branches of Guayas, Pichincha, and Azuay, as they have the largest CSRs, the highest number of riots in the last year and the most significant exposure to violent events since the declaration of the State of Emergency. Accordingly, the Ecuadorian Red Cross proposes the following key actions:

- Pre-positioning of kits to stop bleeding, including tourniquets, hemostatic bandages, dressings, thermal blankets.
- Provision of mechanical ventilators to meet the ventilatory needs of people affected in emergencies, which is a crucial element for patient stabilization.

Once the staff is prepared for emergency care, they must have the necessary supplies and equipment to meet the objective of saving lives, preventing injuries from worsening, promoting recovery, and ensuring humanitarian care in conditions of dignity. At the national level, the ERC will develop workshops to reinforce the knowledge of technical staff and volunteers directed to the 15 branches in the management of equipment and trauma devices, approach, and management of safe scenes, including immediate evacuation, in order to have teams prepared for the new context.



Strengthening the pre-hospital component with the biomedical equipment of the mechanical ventilator allows for adequate ventilation, gas exchange, gas and volume control, frees pre-hospital personnel from airway management through the use of manual devices such as the BVM, and reduces the risks in transport to the medical care center. The ambulance becomes a temporary space for the temporary management of emergencies, considering the saturation of medical care centers, the lack of response capacity, travel time and the dynamics of attacks with explosive material that force the partial closure of emergency rooms.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS):

The Ecuadorian Red Cross is based on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's policy on attention to mental health and psychosocial support needs in protective and safe environments for the development of this response plan.

Throughout the operation, the Ecuadorian Red Cross contemplates the preparation of the MHPSS teams of the Red Cross national network to work in contexts of violence, the dissemination of key messages to the population regarding mental health care, as well as direct attention to the affected population (communities, and members of public and private institutions intervening in the event) and humanitarian workers (Volunteers and hired persons of the National Society) in the 15 prioritized Provincial Branches.

The ERC will design an MHPSS guide for contexts of armed conflict and other situations of violence aimed at technical and volunteer staff. The development of the guide will be accompanied by workshops to reinforce the knowledge of MHPSS teams at the national level.

At the local level, the ERC will provide each of the prioritized branches (El Oro , Esmeraldas, Loja, Manabí, Napo, Morona Santiago y Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas) with various supplies such as Cardboard, sheets of paper, colored pencils, scissors, tempera, disposable plates, Jenga game, mega blocks to assemble, stuffed animals, markers, pencil sharpener, small speaker, small microphone, markers, plasticine, pencils, erasers, shiny papers, rosettes, masking tape, wool, balls, brushes, cloths, glass, flannel, stories and backpacks.

VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION:

The Ecuadorian Red Cross plans to establish strategic coordination with companies, institutions, and home-based organizations. Likewise, technical teams will schedule specific recruitment dates, determining the number of donors expected for each day. Once the date has been coordinated, the collection point will be set up in the agreed location for a whole day, with the objective of efficiently attending all the programmed donors.

After the blood collection day, the collected blood will be safely transported to the National Blood Center or the blood banks associated with the ERC. In these centers, the necessary processing will be performed to obtain the different blood components, such as red blood cell concentrates, platelets, and plasma, among others.

Once processed, these blood components will be distributed to the different health centers in the country. This integral process guarantees that the donated blood becomes vital medical resources, contributing to saving lives throughout the Ecuadorian territory.

As part of the operation, the 10 branches with the highest percentage of the target population (Guayas, Pichincha, Santo Domingo, Manabí, Tungurahua, Loja, El Oro, Morona Santiago, Pastaza, and Chimborazo) will be provided with a mobile infrastructure kit that can be installed and uninstalled according to the identified need. Each kit will consist of 2 tents with 3x3 walls, 10 plastic chairs, 2 plastic tables, 2 coolers, an office suitcase, as well as personal protection set (gloves, masks, cotton, EDTA tubes, lancets, donation bags, bandages, tourniquets, surgical tweezers, and pliers, rollers).

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS (RFL):

The continuity of RFL services according to the needs is imminent. The ERC has opted to act under a prevention approach rather than a response approach solely. During the operation, the National Society will disseminate massive messages and recommendations with accessibility and inclusion to the entire population (national, foreign, Quichua-speaking, and hearing impaired). For this purpose, technical teams will work through physical communication channels (currently carried out in branches through the ICRC Cooperation Agreement and the Pilot Programmatic Partnership with the European Commission). Community meetings to share preventive measures, as well as the use of digital channels on social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, will also be considered during the implementation.

For this operation, the ERC plans two strategies:

Preparedness, by strengthening the RFL points through the provision of materials, supplies, and infrastructure to meet a possible increase of missing person search requests and family news (written or oral messages). Services will be provided by volunteers in dignified attention points with confidentiality, allowing data collection, case management, and the development of coordinated activities with public and private institutions and agencies.

The response will be provided within the framework of the activities programmed in the Cooperation Agreement between the ICRC and the ERC, as well as the Pilot Programmatic Partnership with the European Commission. Based on the RFL protocol of the National Society, a needs assessment will be carried out in advance to provide the community with search requests, connectivity, transmission of documents, family news (Red Cross messages, SALAMAT-oral messages, AM CROSS SERVICES), and safe referral to other ERC services.



PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION (PGI):

The Ecuadorian Red Cross has an action plan and roadmap for the implementation and strengthening of the PGI approach on a permanent basis, being a transversal axis in all actions. Within the Pilot Programmatic Partnership (PPP) with the European Commission, there are activities aimed at strengthening the mapping of entities, services, and activation routes of attention in situations of gender-based violence (GBV), a process that will be updated to the current internal security crisis contexts.

For this operation, the ERC plans to create and disseminate key messages based on the information obtained from the institutional mapping carried out through the PPP. The planned products are radio material, information on routes in case of GBV, and visual digital material: information for the identification of alerts in case of increased GBV risk.

In addition to the victims of GBV, the ERC plans to reach out through key messages to the adults responsible or caregivers of children in order to provide tools to explain to children the internal security crisis while raising awareness for the prevention of domestic violence towards this population group. The expected products are audiovisual material with key information on the approach with children in internal security crisis contexts and preventive alerts on domestic violence situations.

The above will be accompanied by the reinforcement of knowledge of the ERC personnel through virtual training at the national level for humanitarian personnel and volunteers on the following topics:

- Implications of an internal security crisis from a PGI approach.
- Application of PGI minimum standards in contexts of armed violence.
- Gender approach in contexts of armed conflict (the latter, based on the ICRC's expertise).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA):

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) is a cross-cutting approach that is currently being integrated into all Ecuadorian Red Cross programmes and operations, especially in staff and volunteer training spaces and during emergency operations. The ERC has strengthened the integration of the CEA approach since 2022, through the Building Trust (BHA - CEA) and Pilot Programmatic Partnership (PPP - ECHO) projects. Feedback mechanisms are being implemented and capacities are being strengthened in this regard, specifically suggestion boxes are being applied with the objective of measuring the level of satisfaction with the Red Cross services and also listening to community feedback in order to make operational decisions that are aligned with the needs of the population.

In order to take advantage of the installed capacity and articulate the operation with existing projects, information on opinions and possible rumors will be collected through the three physical suggestion boxes per provincial branch, provided by the BHA project (in some cases these mailboxes have been digitized in Kobo), and the data will be processed to have updated information for all ERC projects and interventions, prioritizing this DREF operation. One of the suggestion boxes will be located in the blood collection points. This will provide essential information to design messages and allow the National Society to work on information and inputs based on needs.

Information is a very important tool in the current context because it enables close working, builds trust and facilitates community access and acceptance. This is why the operational strategy also includes the dissemination of key messages to reduce the impact of rumors and increase information about the services and auxiliary role of the Ecuadorian Red Cross, protecting its image from possible confusion with state institutions or other organizations. Finally, as an additional feedback mechanism, a social listening exercise will be implemented to find out the opinion of the community and the main issues under discussion at the time.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT:

The National Volunteer System (SIVOL, by its initials in Spanish) is a fundamental tool for managing the Volunteer Cycle, registering humanitarian activities, and fostering the participation of volunteers in the ERC. Currently, the operational functionalities of SIVOL are centralized during emergencies, preventing the provision of real-time information to decision-makers at branches, thus limiting the capacity for immediate and accurate action by volunteers in response to the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

Considering the recent changes in the context, the ERC identified the need to decentralize SIVOL through the implementation of the Scriptsace License. This license is presented as a solution that enables simultaneous, fast, remote, and collaborative access to the volunteers' registered data, allowing greater flexibility, efficiency, and responsiveness in crises at the national level.

NATIONAL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING:

The Operational Security Policy of the ERC and the operational risks identified in the current context require the adoption of additional measures to guarantee volunteers and hired personnel meet the minimum security requirements to work within the context of other situations of violence, strengthening the institutional image towards the community based on the Fundamental Principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Independence and Neutrality, improving the acceptance, access, perception, and security of the National Society. For this operation, the ERC anticipates the provision of personal protective equipment to volunteers.

At the regional level, the National Society will conduct training for board members at branches on Humanitarian International Law and the Auxiliary Role based on the emerging need to generate communication channels with decision-makers and opinion leaders to ensure that measures are taken to benefit vulnerable people, respect the medical mission and the work of staff and volunteers in the



communities.

TELECOMUNICATIONS:

Given the restriction of rights established in the SoE and the possible limitations on communication issues that may arise during situations of violence in the country, the ERC must ensure that its telecommunications system is enabled and functioning at 100% as an operational link for the work of local response teams. It is important to mention that currently, in the country, there are so-called "dark zones" that, due to their geographic location or relief, complicate the connectivity of the teams with their distribution antennas and the Headquarters. As a result, the ERC anticipates having alternative communications systems in the case of 6 provinces through the installation of a "versatile gateway (ve-pg3)" linked to the fiber optic service, allowing permanent connectivity.

In previous operations, the ICRC provided support for the acquisition of kits and physical equipment. However, considering that the National Society has one rented technician who, due to the scenario, would not be able to implement the setup, the support of an IT and Telecommunications Coordinator, in Surge modality, to advise the ERC on the design and installation of the National Society's telecommunications system was considered. Based on the inputs received by the Surge, a telecoms strategy was designed to strengthen the Telecommunications system of the ERC in face of the security crisis.

The National Telecommunications System Strengthening Strategy aims to provide technical assistance and training to build capacity in Provincial Branches, enhance the skills of telecom focal points, and expand the VHF repeater network for reliable radio communication. To achieve these goals, the strategy involves hiring a telecommunications equipment maintenance company to support the 17 prioritized Provincial Branches. This company will handle maintenance and installation of VHF and HF systems, with local volunteers receiving training on working at heights, electrical risks, and equipment installation. Additionally, a national telecom technician will oversee the logistical implementation and validate the installation reports.

SECURITY CONTEXT ASSESSMENT:

The operational strategy will include an assessment regarding the insecurity context in Ecuador, in prioritized provinces, providing inputs to make decisions not only to the Ecuadorian Red Cross but also to its partners. The strategy aims to assess insecurity's context using the CEA approach, which involves creating a tool to compile standardized quantitative data for analysis and national decision-making. This includes geographic information, vulnerable groups, community perceptions, and emerging interests related to the humanitarian impact of internal security conflicts. Data will be collected through a survey with multiple-choice questions hosted on Kobo Collective Services, with support from IFRC's Information Management area, and administered nationwide by volunteers using a structured questionnaire. As a result, a report will be developed, analyzing the information and providing recommendations.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

Preparedness: focused on strengthening the capacities of the National Society through training and updating the knowledge of volunteer and hired personnel considering the context of the emergency. As well as equipping Provincial Branches with basic materials to assist the population.

Response: efforts will be concentrated on the implementation of the planned services to assist the population that requires it, ensuring the safety of personnel at all times. Through this operation, the ERC plans to reach 4,500 people through pre-hospital care services, mental health, and psychosocial support, and key messages on gender-based violence and domestic violence.

This number has been calculated considering the National Society's previous experiences supporting affected populations during social mobilizations in 2022, as well as the information collected by the National Society on the incidents of violence.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

- People injured during armed clashes.
- People who report psycho-emotional affectation due to the security crisis.
- People separated from family members or acquaintances due to clashes, mobility limitations, or cuts in connectivity services.
- Persons with catastrophic illnesses or who do not have access to permanent medication due to limitations in the provision of health services.
- Priority groups of attention: the elderly, children, adolescents, pregnant women, and people with disabilities.
- People who do not receive care from government agencies due to the demand for a service.



Total Targeted Population

Women	1,524	Rural	30%
Girls (under 18)	785	Urban	70%
Men	1,446	People with disabilities (estimated)	1%
Boys (under 18)	745		
Total targeted population	4,500		

Risk and Security Considerations

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

Risk	Mitigation action
Humanitarian personnel of the Ecuadorian Red Cross could be victims of sexual harassment or abuse during the operation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the teams are mixed in their gender composition. In no case may they be only female teams. - Before going out on the operation, recognize the location of the nearest Community Police Unit (CPU). - Respect the hours of operation established by Operational Safety. - In the event of sexual abuse or harassment, individuals should: (1) Immediately leave the area or place where the incident occurred; (2) Immediately report the incident to the Operational Security Officer in their province; (3) Call 911 or go to the nearest Community Police Unit (UPC).
Overexposure of volunteers and staff to the experiences of communities affected by violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize and ensure the emotional deactivation of personnel and volunteers involved in response actions.
Collateral damage to volunteers, humanitarian personnel, and institutional assets in armed clashes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce mission activities in areas with high levels of violence. - Apply the recommendations for safe behaviors for volunteers and humanitarian personnel. - Avoid exposure in high-risk areas.
A reputational impact of the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid pronouncements regarding the existence of internal armed conflict. - The spokesperson will be the National President of the ERC. - Dissemination in social networks about the Auxiliary role, Fundamental Principles, and Humanitarian Action of the ERC.
The conditions for the second trigger to start the response phase are not met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular monitoring of the situation by the ERC to be prepared for any Operational Update required on time. - Close coordination with government partners such as the Ombudsman office, Ministry of Health, and humanitarian organizations to exchange readings on the humanitarian context regularly. - Close coordination with IFRC personnel to prepare transition plans following IFRC-DREF procedures.
Exposure to risks and harms to the well-being of personnel and volunteers, including aggression and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dissemination of the Auxiliary and humanitarian role of the ERC. - Socialization of recommendations for safe behavior in situations of violence. - Implementation and dissemination of the National Security Policy



Health effects due to the lack or improper use of personal protective equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal protective equipment according to the context of the emergency. - Periodic monitoring of compliance with security protocols at the national and Provincial Board levels.
Limited access to areas affected by violence and related to the El Niño phenomenon (mass movements, flooding, structural collapse, and loss of the road network).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permanent monitoring of weather conditions and the condition of access roads to affected areas.
Personnel and volunteers involved in emergency operations are impacted by significant exposure to risk and potential harm, which affects both their physical well-being and emotional health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize and ensure the deactivation of personnel and volunteers involved in response actions.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

Among others, the following security and safety concerns are continuously observed within the operation:

1. **Prioritization of Staff and Volunteer Safety:** ERC security protocols and contingency plans place high importance on ensuring the safety of staff and volunteers during the implementation of community activities. Strategies to ensure safety conditions are met include transparent and clear communication with communities on the role of the ERC and proposed activities.
2. **Proactive Security Assessment:** The ERC security Focal Point actively works to support RC staff and volunteers in the field. This includes ongoing assessments of security conditions, likely with the help of Provincial Branches. This proactive approach helps mitigate risks before deployment and can lead to suspension of activities in some intervention areas as a result of poor security conditions for staff and volunteers in the field.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No

Planned Intervention



Budget: CHF 101,708
Targeted Persons: 4,500

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of people receiving pre-hospital care services	700	2,896
Number of staff and volunteers who receive training in pre-hospital care and use of equipment in ambulances	40	87
Number of people receiving care for mental health and psychosocial support needs	500	1,717
Number of humanitarian personnel receiving care and self-care interventions	300	426
Number of units of blood collected, processed and delivered to the public health system	3,000	3,648



Number of people reached by the Voluntary Blood Donation (VBD) awareness campaign	100,000	247,000
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Progress Towards Outcome

I. Pre-hospital care

In total, 2,896 individuals have received pre-hospital care services to date, comprising 1,538 men, 1,214 women, and 144 individuals who did not specify their gender. This care was provided amidst a security crisis and violent scenarios, as well as due to collateral effects of these situations and after the decrees of the state of exception. Despite these challenges, pre-hospital care was provided continuously, with ambulances never ceasing to offer assistance.

The care primarily addressed trauma injuries, clinical emergencies, traffic accidents, and secondary transportation due to the lack of response capacity or saturation of emergency medical services. By category, the cases were as follows: traffic accidents (667), intoxications and poisoning (55), trauma, injuries, and falls (926), medical emergencies (768), obstetric emergencies (47), and secondary transport.

The services were provided by response teams of the Provincial Branches from 8 January to 10 April 2024. By Provincial Branch, the following services were reported: Azuay (516), Chimborazo (92), Cotopaxi (56), El Oro (420), Esmeraldas (41), Guayas (250), Loja (146), Manabí (156), Morona Santiago (14), Napo (12), Pastaza (35), Pichincha (795), Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas (256), Sucumbíos (15), and Tungurahua (92).

Ambulance materials from the provincial branches were replenished to ensure technical assistance in compliance with established protocols. Services provided can be viewed at the following link: <https://goo.su/OH3kk>.

Also, 87 staff and volunteers received training in pre-hospital care and the use of equipment in ambulances. The updating of knowledge was conducted in three phases: training on the Ecuadorian Red Cross E-Learning platform with the Virtual Basic First Aid Course, an on-site course for the Practical Application of Basic First Aid (PAB) including practical exercises to evaluate learning, and a classroom module with exercises conducted in a controlled manner to establish participants' knowledge levels.

Emphasis was placed on using protective equipment such as gas masks and handling kit components to stop bleeding. Techniques for immediate transport and evacuation, airway management, and control of vital signs were also taught to prevent deterioration of the affected person's health condition.

II. Mental health

a. Training of volunteer personnel of the Provincial Branches in mental health and psychosocial support in the context of internal security crisis.

In March, two virtual workshops were held to train volunteer leaders of 13 Provincial Branches in mental health and support, including the context of internal security crises. They were given didactic, technical and methodological material. In April, the volunteer leaders replicated the contents through face-to-face workshops for the teams of 8 Provincial Boards.

b. Procurement and distribution of mental health and psychosocial support tools

Mental health and psychosocial support problems require the preparation of personnel and that they have the tools to meet the needs of the affected populations in the community, including the care and self-care of the intervening persons. Therefore, 15 mental health and psychosocial support kits were delivered.

c. Adaptation of the self-care and care guide to the responder

The adaptation to the national context of a tool that aims to provide practical tools to preserve the mental health of a person who is in charge of another person, as well as techniques to self-preserve our mental health, was carried out.

d. MHPSS services for communities

1,717 individuals in the 15 provinces received Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) from humanitarian personnel. This support was provided in the context of internal security, which has had significant effects on the population, including post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety, among others.

e. Self-care workshops for humanitarian personnel



426 people were assisted via telematic and face-to-face channels, to receive emotional discharges after intervening with the population affected by security crises.

III. Voluntary blood donation

The 10 prioritized Provincial Branches implemented strategies to establish mobile collection points from January to March, aiming to increase monthly donations by 100 units. By April, they successfully collected 3,648 units of blood to meet the needs of the national health system. Voluntary blood donation kits were distributed to the Provincial Branches, with additional kits available to replenish equipment used during blood collection campaigns.

A 30-second 2D animated video with a clear message about the importance of blood donation and raising awareness for donors with less common blood groups was created. The campaign was conducted through the institution's social networks, reaching 100,000 people nationwide. Additionally, dissemination efforts extended to the institution's social networks, reaching a total of 247,000 people nationwide.

To facilitate blood collections in safe locations, tents were set up at the prioritized Provincial Branches. These tents allow for donor selection and blood collection procedures, with staff equipped with the necessary kits for technical procedures. These supplies are now available at the Provincial Branches that participated in the blood collection campaigns.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 10,118

Targeted Persons: 2,000

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
People reached nationwide through the dissemination/distribution of key (direct) messages:	2,000	3,421
Humanitarian personnel, and volunteers reached through PGI activities	100	123

Progress Towards Outcome

I. Production of materials:

The following audiovisual and radio products were produced: 1 educational-communication video to address the treatment of crisis situations with children, to be disseminated in community workshops; 1 awareness-raising video for adults on dialogue with children in crisis situations, to be disseminated through social networks; 2 awareness-raising and information spots on routes to take in the event of gender-based violence, in Spanish; 2 awareness-raising spots on gender-based violence in Kichwa and Shuar languages.

II.- Dissemination:

The spots in Spanish were disseminated through a radio station with wide national coverage, which achieved a much greater reach than initially planned. Likewise, the spots in the languages of the indigenous peoples and nationalities were broadcast through a network of popular and community radios, which fit in the indigenous territories and communities, to ensure a greater reach, as evidenced by the certificate issued by the radio network.

As for the videos, the educational-communicative material was distributed - together with its use guide - to the territorial network of the ERC reaching not only the Provincial Branches framed in the project, but also the 24 provinces of the country; while the awareness-raising video was disseminated through a paid advertisement, which was also one of the reasons why a much wider reach than initially planned has been achieved.

Scope of dissemination:

- Radio La Bruja: 25,855 people
- Community radio network - CORAPE: 305,453 people.
- CRE social networks: 96,332 people.



Of these figures, 3,421 people correspond to people directly reached through traditional radio.

III. Knowledge reinforcement:

A virtual workshop was held to reinforce the PGI approach in humanitarian assistance during emergency situations, with a focus on assistance according to the vulnerabilities of priority groups. The ICRC specialist on differentiated impacts in situations of violence was one of the panelists. 123 staff and volunteers participated in this activity.



Migration And Displacement

Budget: CHF 19,170

Targeted Persons: 300

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of people receiving talks on self-care measures to prevent the breakup of family links	300	1,309
Number of people reached by means of preventive messages received through mass messaging and social networks	1,000,000	1,101,253
Strengthened RFL service points	15	15

Progress Towards Outcome

I. Strengthening of RFL mobile service points:

Materials were acquired that will be used to strengthen the attention to cases of restoring family links and joint attention with the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support line of action. Materials purchased for the 15 RFL service points, which were delivered between March and April, included structures and furniture such as tents, tables, chairs, and advertising totems, as well as electrical equipment like extensions, power strips, voltage regulators, and floodlights.

II. Adaptation of preventive measures in Spanish, English, Quichua, and Ecuadorian sign language

Design and production of three videos with content on self-care measures to prevent the breakup of family links. These videos were made in Spanish and subtitled in English, Quichua and Ecuadorian sign language.

II. Dissemination of key messages to prevent the severance of family ties

Dissemination was considered through two digital outreach mechanisms in the 15 intervention provinces:

- 1.- Massive dissemination by contracting the WhatsApp mass messaging service.
 - 2.- Sponsorship for dissemination in institutional social networks of the videos with preventive measures.
- In addition, provinces and cantons with the largest population, Quichua-speaking cantons and tourist presence were selected.

III. Dissemination of self-care measures in the community

The "RFL Preventive Measures" service was implemented in schools, communities, strategic partners, mass influx sites, temporary lodging, land terminals, among other places, by RFL referents and volunteers trained in RFL from the Provincial Branches. These actions, aimed at promoting awareness of the importance of applying communication and/or contact practices with their families in the different contexts throughout the country, were carried out through the following process:

- 1.- Identification and dialogue with local representatives.
- 2.- Delivery of cards with preventive measures in RFL and TAGS suitcases (supplies prepositioned and financed by ICRC).
- 3.- Advice on how to fill out the cards and how to use them.





Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 20,786

Targeted Persons: 100,000

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
People reached nationwide with mass messaging on key messages on the Fundamental Principles and Auxiliary Role of the State.	100,000	263,346
Number of people reached by feedback mechanisms	300	820
Context Assessment	1	0

Progress Towards Outcome

Key messages on the Auxiliary Role of the Ecuadorian Red Cross have been developed in order to sensitize the community and facilitate understanding of its role. Messages related to the Emblem were also disseminated in social networks. This allowed the community to consider the importance of not using the ERC emblem in unauthorized places, strengthening the knowledge of its correct use. In addition, a video was disseminated on TikTok about the importance of the emblem. These messages have been disseminated nationwide through mass messaging campaigns, especially prioritizing provinces with high rates of violence, reaching a total of 263,346 people.

A suggestion box was implemented, which facilitated the exchange of ideas, expression of concerns and needs, as well as the possibility of suggesting changes in the various activities.

During the activities at the provincial branches, the community was invited to share its opinion, which resulted in the receipt of 820 satisfaction surveys. These data reveal an 89.9% level of satisfaction with the services provided, 98% satisfaction with the information provided, and 95% satisfaction with the use of the facilities.

With regard to the production of videos and communication material, six 2D animated videos were produced with a duration of approximately 30 seconds each, in order to socialize in an interactive way with society messages of self-care, respect for the Emblem of the Red Cross and the Fundamental Principles. The videos were published on the Institution's social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X).

Finally, in order to inform the public about the self-care measures, five videos were posted on social networks during a calendar month on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X. The objective was to socialize them with at least 100,000 users, focusing on men and women from 18 to 65 years old. The activity ended up reaching 1,040,546 people. This led to discover that sensitive issues can be addressed through communication strategies:

- Facebook is the social network with the largest audience to achieve the proposed goals and the public with the highest acceptance of the publication are males between 18 and 64 years old.

- On Twitter/X, the posts mostly impacted the male audience between the ages of 20 and 29, and generated views of the social network's profile from this audience.

- Given that the budget facilitated additional advertising development on the TikTok platform, the reach of this indicator managed to double on the platform, which has a great reception among the ages of 15 and 45 years. To evaluate the impact of the messages, direct responses, reach, and complete video views are considered according to the social network.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 4,526

Targeted Persons: 0



Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of monitoring visits made during operation	1	0
# of surge deployments	1	1

Progress Towards Outcome

An IT and Telecommunications Coordinator was deployed to support the National Society in the diagnosis of the telecoms system.

Key Achievements:

- Supported the Ecuadorian Red Cross: Providing guidance on purchasing and installing communication systems in priority provincial branches.
- Enhanced Knowledge Base: Reviewed and updated the National Society's training materials on telecommunications.
- Comprehensive Evaluation of National Telecommunications Infrastructure: Conducted an in-depth assessment of the national telecommunications system in nine branches, encompassing:
 - a. Radio Network Assessment: Evaluated the utilization and operational effectiveness of the radio network, identifying areas for improvement and potential expansion.
 - b. Coverage Testing: Conducted thorough coverage tests in visited provinces to map signal strength and identify coverage gaps.
 - c. Equipment Inventory and Maintenance Review: Analyzed the registration and maintenance procedures for equipment deployed across the visited provinces, ensuring optimal performance and longevity.
- National Improvement Proposal: Leveraging the insights gained from the comprehensive evaluation, a comprehensive national improvement proposal was developed.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 62,649

Targeted Persons: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Implementation of the Scriptsace license to achieve the decentralization of the National Volunteering System (SIVOL)	1	1
Number of volunteers trained in Stay Safe and MSR	15	21
Number of volunteers provided with protective and visibility equipment	300	1,327
Number of government board members trained in IHL, Auxiliary Role, and Security Policy of the ERC	15	31
Lessons learned workshop	1	0
Provinces that strengthen their telecommunications network	17	0

Progress Towards Outcome

I. Government board members training



With the participation of 31 people, including volunteers and presidents of the 15 initially prioritized branches, the main objective of this activity was achieved, which focused on providing and consolidating the preparedness of the National Society to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population in the prioritized provinces, according to the risk analysis and the evolution of the Internal Security Crisis. It was attended by people from the Provincial Branches of: Azuay, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Loja, Manabí, Morona Santiago, Napo, Pastaza, Pichincha, Tungurahua, Sucumbíos and Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas.

For the development of this internal training activity and the strengthening of the National Society, 400 copies of the Statute and Regulations of the ERC and 10,000 leaflets on IHL were printed. The product of the workshop was capacities strengthened to identify the relevant and complex aspects about Armed Conflicts, and groups of persons under the specific protection of IHL in an International Armed Conflict (IAC) and in a Non-International Armed Conflict (NIC).

II. Provision of protective and visibility equipment

With the personal protection equipment acquired for 1,327 volunteers, a need was identified to print pocket-sized brochures for volunteers and humanitarian personnel. Thus, a pocket guide "Guide for Emergency Response Teams" was developed, which is useful for providing clear guidelines for communication in critical situations, as it is a tool for maintaining coherence and effectiveness in humanitarian actions. The distribution was made to the provinces of the project and according to the needs of each Provincial Branch.

The content of the guide focused on recommendations, key messages to support the ERC work and frequently asked questions. In this way, designated spokespersons and operational humanitarian personnel have a guide that allows them to better develop their work and know in advance how to proceed in a crisis scenario.

III. Implementation of the Scriptcase license to achieve the decentralization of the National Volunteering System (SIVOL)

With the acquisition of the Scriptcase license, the following advances have been achieved: Decentralized operational functionalities, new functionalities and improvements in the Volunteer System. Volunteer management can be carried out optimally and efficiently to the more than 8,000 volunteers, through the provincial volunteer coordinators with the use of SIVOL.

IV. Volunteers capacity strengthening

21 volunteers were trained in Stay Safe and Minimum-Security Requirements (MSR) to enhance their readiness and ability to manage risks effectively in their response to emergencies.

About Support Services

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

300 volunteers and 60 hired personnel will be part of this operation, organized in teams of approximately 12 people per Provincial Board as first response teams in case activation is required, with the exception of the provinces of Guayas, Pichincha, Esmeraldas, Manabí, Loja, Napo, Chimborazo, Tungurahua, Cotopaxi and El Oro where, due to the high impact, a greater number of first response teams will be considered.

In addition, for this operation, 2 full-time technicians will be hired to manage the plan according to the following profile:

- The project coordinator will manage the execution of the plan with the technical areas of the National Headquarters and the Provincial Boards, ensuring compliance with the guidelines and instruments of the SRA and IFRC within the established deadlines.
- Administrative logistic assistant, who will support the coordinator in the planning, execution, and justification of the activities approved in the project. Experience in operational tasks such as warehouse management, inventories, drafting and filing of administrative documents, and execution reports will be considered.

It is also planned to allocate 50% of the salary of a national financial technician, who will be assigned to partially support the financial, administrative, and accounting processes for the fulfillment of the planned activities, ensuring compliance with the policies and regulations of the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

Finally, it is important to have the support of a telecommunications specialist who will support the National Society in strengthening its telecommunications systems to the territorial network so that they have fluid communication that does not depend on the normal connection but on an alternative one, taking into account the geographic location, which prevents and reduces impacts to the ERC's operational security.



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

The support of an IT and Telecommunications Coordinator who can be deployed for 2 months to advise the ERC on the design and installation of the National Society's telecommunications system is required.

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

All procurement will be made locally through the application of the internal procurement processes of the ERC in force and compliance with the guidelines established by the IFRC.

How will this operation be monitored?

The Ecuadorian Red Cross has a Planning and Quality Management Department, which is institutionally responsible for monitoring and evaluating projects. During this process, alerts are issued on deviations from planning and under-execution of activities or indicators.

The tools used allow first planning each of the activities and indicators by means of a timetable, identifying and assigning responsible parties, deadlines, and verifiable indicators, all aligned with the framework results. For monitoring, 3 types of spaces are maintained:

- Follow-up: Review of the progress schedule, compliance with agreements, and financial aspects on a biweekly basis,
- Monitoring spaces: Evaluation of objectives, deadlines, and framework level indicators. IFRC participation is linked to monthly periodicity.
- Spaces for continuous improvement: Identification of knots and their causes; identification of successes and their causes upon completion.

Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation

In a context where uncertainty and complexity prevail, the Red Cross must maintain the trust, integrity, and respect of the community, authorities, media, and other stakeholders. Therefore, this Communication Plan is developed with the main objective of safeguarding and reinforcing the humanitarian, neutral, and impartial role of the Ecuadorian Red Cross, ensuring the safety and well-being of our volunteers, humanitarian workers, and the people we serve.

The effectiveness of this plan is based on internal coordination at all levels, the strategic use of communication tools, and the implementation of clear and consistent National Society protocols. Through this document, we outline the specific strategies, actions, and responsibilities that will guide our communication during this crisis, ensuring that the Red Cross remains a pillar of hope, solidarity, and humanitarian action in Ecuador.

General Communication Objective:

Strengthen the position, reputation, and credibility of the Ecuadorian Red Cross-National Society in the country within the current context, ensuring consistent, transparent, and effective communication both internally with our volunteers and staff and externally with authorities, media, strategic allies, and the community, in general, promoting the movement's fundamental principles for the fulfillment of the human mission for the most vulnerable.

Specific Communication Objectives:

1. Position the Humanitarian Role: Reaffirm and consolidate the role of the ERC as a neutral and impartial humanitarian entity, highlighting its unwavering commitment to fundamental principles and its work in the midst of the internal security crisis.
2. Protect Institutional Integrity: Implement communication actions to protect and defend the physical, moral, and operational integrity of our volunteers, humanitarian workers, vehicles, and medical missions, highlighting their essential and protected role in crises for the country's internal security through messages and the use of social networks and digital platforms.
3. Establish Effective Communication Channels: Create and maintain efficient and reliable communication channels with all stakeholders, including the media, government authorities, partner organizations, and the community, to ensure timely and accurate dissemination of relevant information, minimize misinformation, and maximize humanitarian impact.
4. Avoid controversies and politicization by not engaging in public communication regarding the applicable legal framework.

The following communication actions will be considered:



- Production of awareness messages
- Virtual Information
- Virtual Information Sessions
- Provincial Social Networks
- Alliances with Local Media
- Pocket Manual Production
- Alert and Notification Systems

Through these communicative actions, the ERC seeks to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated, and effective response. This will allow it to keep the population informed about ERC's actions, position the auxiliary role and fundamental principles, and meticulously care for the ERC's reputation and integrity as an institution committed to the welfare and safety of the community that serves, while avoiding controversies and politicization.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

MDREC025 - Ecuadorian Red Cross Security Crises

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	151,781
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	0
Health	101,708
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	10,118
Education	0
Migration	19,170
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	20,786
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	67,175
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	4,526
National Society Strengthening	62,649
TOTAL BUDGET	218,956

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



Contact Information

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[Click here for the reference](#)

