



Portuguese Red Cross volunteers conduct needs assessments in areas affected by wildfires. Source: Portuguese Red Cross

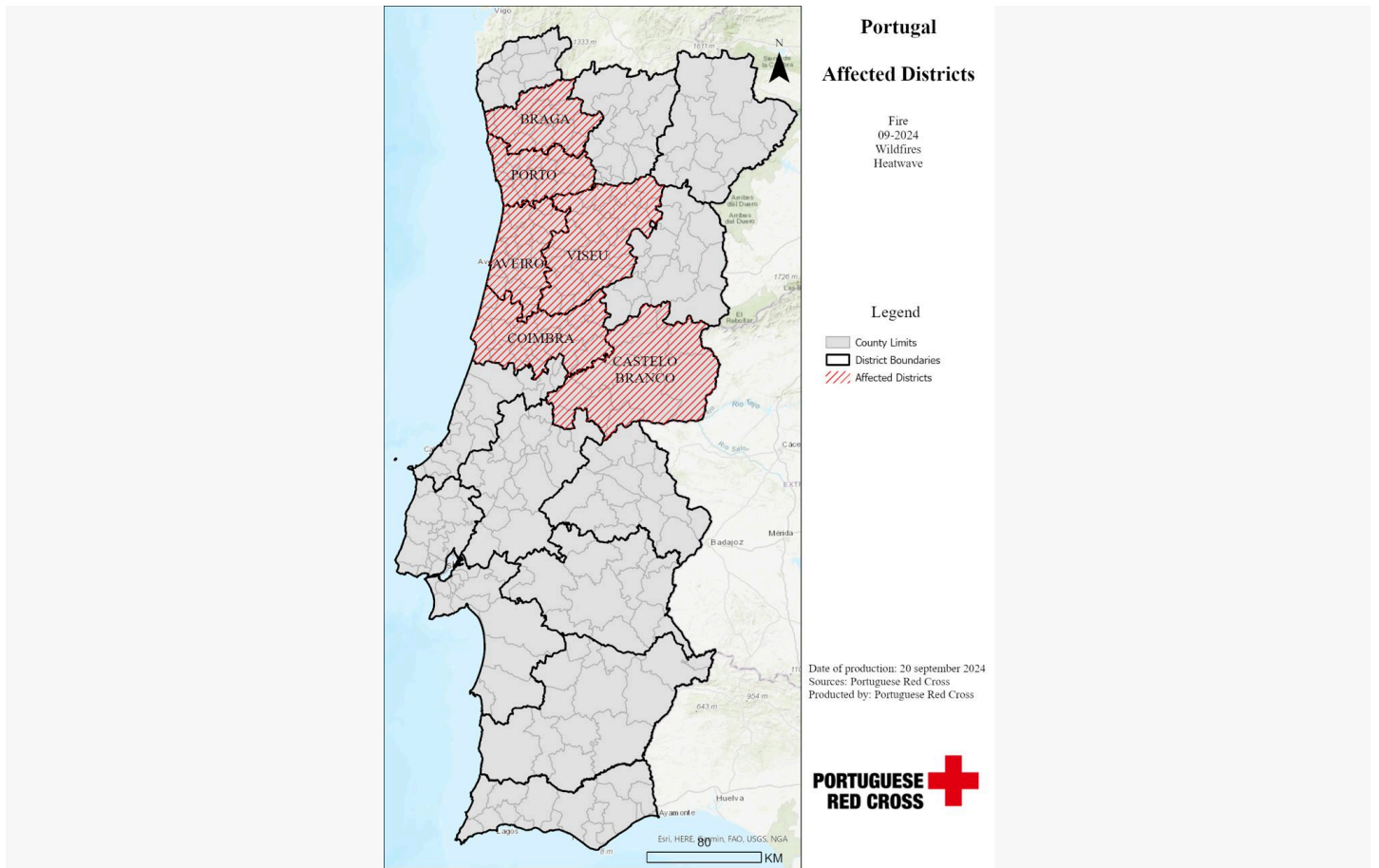
Appeal: <b>MDRPT001</b>	Country: <b>Portugal</b>	Hazard: <b>Fire</b>	Type of DREF: <b>Response</b>
Crisis Category: <b>Yellow</b>	Event Onset: <b>Sudden</b>	DREF Allocation: <b>CHF 113,470</b>	
Glide Number: <b>WF-2024-000170-PRT</b>	People Affected: <b>41,329 people</b>	People Targeted: <b>2,197 people</b>	
Operation Start Date: <b>29-09-2024</b>	Operation Timeframe: <b>6 months</b>	Operation End Date: <b>31-03-2025</b>	DREF Published: <b>30-09-2024</b>

Targeted Areas: **Castelo Branco, Coimbra, Aveiro, Viseu, Porto, Braga**

# Description of the Event

## Date of event

17-09-2024



Affected areas - Districts of Aveiro, Coimbra, Castelo Branco, Braga, Viseu and Porto. Source: Portuguese Red Cross

## What happened, where and when?

Since 15 September 2024, Portugal has been facing severe forest fires, particularly in the Central and Northern regions. These fires, worsened by unusually high temperatures and severe drought, are proving difficult to contain due to their intensity and rapid spread. Emergency services are actively working to control the flames, and neighboring countries are providing support. The government has issued evacuation orders and warnings in the affected areas.

On 17 September, the Portuguese government declared a state of calamity in all municipalities impacted by the fires, including severely affected districts such as Aveiro (Águeda, Albergaria-a-Velha, Oliveira de Azeméis, Sever do Vouga), Viseu (Castro Daire, Carregal do Sal, Nelas, Penalva do Castelo), Coimbra (Coimbra, Tábua, Pampilhosa da Serra, Miranda do Corvo), Braga (Vieira do Minho), Porto (Gondomar, Paços de Ferreira, Paredes, Baião, Amarante) and Castelo Branco (Louriçal do Campo). State of Alert warnings have been issued, and authorities are using drones and satellite technology to monitor the situation and predict the movement of the fire fronts.

As of 19 September, 14 fire fronts were active, with 1,957 operatives and 592 vehicles on the ground.

The National Emergency and Civil Protection Authority (ANEPC) reported at the latest press conference that:

- 102 households have been evacuated, displacing approximately 300 people.
- Emergency shelters were housing 59 people in Castro Daire (33), Carregal do Sal (15), and Águeda (11).
- 70 households have experienced total or partial housing loss, and psychosocial intervention teams are assessing their needs.
- In Albergaria-a-Velha, 40 families have been displaced.

The total burned area exceeds 121,000 hectares, with over 100,000 hectares in the north and center, accounting for 83% of the total area burned in mainland Portugal. These figures come from the European Copernicus system and the National Emergency and Civil Protection



Authority.

The situation is particularly critical in Aveiro, Viseu, and Coimbra due to adverse weather conditions, including strong winds and temperatures exceeding 35°C:

- In Aveiro, around 20,000 hectares have burned, particularly in Oliveira de Azeméis, Albergaria-a-Velha, Sever do Vouga, and Águeda.
- Viseu has experienced significant fires, especially in Penalva do Castelo and Nelas, though precise data is unavailable.
- Coimbra has seen major fires in Tábua and Pampilhosa da Serra.
- Castelo Branco's municipal authorities estimate that 300 hectares of forest and agricultural land have been lost.

The forest fires that are hitting Portugal, are having a devastating impact on the central and northern regions of the country, directly affecting thousands of people and resulting in substantial losses for local communities. The area burnt exceeds 62,000 hectares, destroying property, livelihoods and essential infrastructure. Mass evacuations, the destruction of homes and serious damage to the agricultural and tourism sectors reflect the prolonged seeing impact of this disaster, which requires a robust and coordinated humanitarian response.

At the time of this report, there are still active fires. Local authorities are monitoring the situation by minute. Government Psychosocial Services, supported by local organizations and Portuguese Red Cross (PRC), are conducting emergency needs assessment in the most vulnerable communities affected.



Volunteers providing food, hygiene and first aid kits to the firefighters on ground. Source: PRC



PRC was on the ground, coordinating medical emergency assistances with governmental authorities during the wildfires in Albergaria-a-Velha. Source: PRC

## Scope and Scale

To determine the scope and scale of this event, secondary information from national government bodies and their official assessments has been used, alongside data from the PRC's initial needs assessment through triangulation. It is important to note that this assessment is preliminary and does not reflect the full extent of the damage or impact. Ongoing assessments will provide additional information, and this report will be updated accordingly.

According to the National Emergency and Civil Protection Authority, more than 37,772 personnel have been involved in the response to the fire emergency, supported by 10,639 ground resources and over 827 aerial missions. The European Civil Protection Mechanism also deployed eight additional aircraft to assist firefighting efforts, which are working alongside local resources to contain the most severe

outbreaks. International support has also included technical, financial, and material assistance.

Considering that the affected areas were declared to be in a state of calamity (the declaration of the government doesn't state a list of municipalities or districts), it is estimated that at least 10% of the total population in these councils had their daily lives impacted by the disaster. This corresponds to approximately 41,329 people in total. Additionally, as reported by ANEPC, five people have died as a result of the fires, and 161 people have been injured, 12 critically. In response to the tragic loss of life, the government declared 20 September a Day of National Mourning to honor the victims.

The initial needs assessment conducted by the PRC identifies that the main needs of the affected populations are related to accommodation, hygiene kits, drinking water, psychosocial support, food support and financial support. Furthermore, authorities reported that thousands were indirectly affected due to destroyed infrastructure, power outages, and road closures, which prevented access to workplaces.

The most vulnerable populations are in rural areas of Aveiro, Viseu, Coimbra, Braga, Porto and Castelo Branco, where the fires forced evacuations, destroyed homes, and disrupted livelihoods. The economic consequences are particularly severe in agriculture and forestry-dependent areas, where decreased productivity is expected to increase economic vulnerability among affected families. Major road closures for at least two days further disrupted daily routines, with many residents unable to work and several companies forced to adjust or cancel services. Beyond material losses, the psychological toll is significant, with many requiring psychosocial support due to the trauma and imminent danger caused by the fires.

In addition, the wildfire-affected regions in Portugal are now under a yellow alert due to forecasts of heavy rain and thunderstorms, which could worsen the situation by triggering landslides and flooding. The loss of vegetation has left the soil vulnerable to erosion, particularly in mountainous areas like Viseu and Castelo Branco. This poses a new crisis for already-affected populations, requiring swift resource mobilization to prevent further damage.

## Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Euro News	<a href="https://pt.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/09/20/portugal-cumpre-dia-de-luto-nacional-em-memoria-das-vitimas-dos-incendios">https://pt.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/09/20/portugal-cumpre-dia-de-luto-nacional-em-memoria-das-vitimas-dos-incendios</a>
2. Portuguese Government	<a href="https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc24/comunicacao/noticia?i=governo-decreta-dia-de-luto-nacional-em-homenagem-as-vitimas-dos-incendios">https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc24/comunicacao/noticia?i=governo-decreta-dia-de-luto-nacional-em-homenagem-as-vitimas-dos-incendios</a>
3. Copernicus	<a href="https://atmosphere.copernicus.eu/wildfires-rage-across-northern-portugal-cams-tracks-their-impacts">https://atmosphere.copernicus.eu/wildfires-rage-across-northern-portugal-cams-tracks-their-impacts</a>
4. Portuguese Government	<a href="https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc24/comunicacao/noticia?i=governo-declara-situacao-de-calamidade-em-todos-os-municipios-afetados-pelos-incendios">https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc24/comunicacao/noticia?i=governo-declara-situacao-de-calamidade-em-todos-os-municipios-afetados-pelos-incendios</a>
5. SIC Notícias	<a href="https://sicnoticias.pt/especiais/incendios-em-portugal/2024-09-18-saiba-quais-as-estradas-que-estao-cortadas-esta-quarta-feira-55588567">https://sicnoticias.pt/especiais/incendios-em-portugal/2024-09-18-saiba-quais-as-estradas-que-estao-cortadas-esta-quarta-feira-55588567</a>
6. WebJornal Notícias ao Minuto	<a href="https://www.noticiasao minuto.com/pais/2634452/incendios-protecao-civil-contabiliza-cinco-mortos-e-118-feridos">https://www.noticiasao minuto.com/pais/2634452/incendios-protecao-civil-contabiliza-cinco-mortos-e-118-feridos</a>

## Previous Operations

Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years?	No
--	----



Did it affect the same population group?	-
Did the National Society respond?	-
Did the National Society request funding form DREF for that event(s)	-
If yes, please specify which operation	-
<b>If you have answered yes to all questions above, justify why the use of DREF for a recurrent event, or how this event should not be considered recurrent:</b>	
-	

## Current National Society Actions

### Start date of National Society actions

15-09-2024

<b>Shelter, Housing And Settlements</b>	<p>Since the beginning of the fires, the PRC has been available for competent authorities in case of need of providing and maintain emergency shelter for the population. So far the response is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two (2) pre-positioned trailers with emergency shelter capacity for 50 people each (camp beds, hygiene kits, personal boxes, blankets, children play area, pop-up tent and coordination table and chairs) - Locations: Frazão (North Region) and Águeda (Center Region).</li> <li>- One (1) emergency shelter ready to receive 15 people in the local Branch of Arco de Baúlhe (North Region).</li> <li>- A restspace area for firefighters was created in the North Region of the country.</li> </ul>
<b>Livelihoods And Basic Needs</b>	<p>The PRC had 515 food kits (cookies, energy bar and fruit pulp) pre-positioned in its National Warehouse. Within the first 24 hours of the response, those began to be distributed to the local branches involved in the response. The volunteers from branches are distributing these basic supplies to the firefighters and to the people on the ground fighting the fire.</p> <p>An emergency needs assessment is being conducted in support to the Local Branches, with the social services of the local authorities, to identify displaced families who may need support for both short-term and long-term recovery and resettlement.</p> <p>Its intended to maintain close collaboration with local authorities to ensure that support for housing and resettlement is coordinated and efficient, ensuring that urgent needs are adequately met and that the most vulnerable families are prioritized in accessing housing support.</p>
<b>Multi Purpose Cash</b>	<p>An emergency needs assessment is also being conducted to identify affected families who have lost their livelihoods and to consider the possibility of integrating those affected into the PRC cash assistance ("Cartão Dá"), which is already in place for social support.</p> <p>The goal is to foster close collaboration with local authorities to ensure that support for basic needs is coordinated and efficient. This approach aims to effectively address urgent needs and prioritize access for the most vulnerable families.</p>
<b>Health</b>	<p>Health is the strongest sector of the PRC mandate.</p> <p>The actions take so far are:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As requested by both Civil Protection Authorities and National Emergency Institute, the pre-positioning of Basic Life Support Ambulances in Fire Command Posts and Urban Areas. So far, were deployed 35 ambulances, which assisted 40 people.</li> <li>- Support to Águeda Basic Emergency Service with Advanced Life Support equipment and Human Resources (medical doctors), to alleviate pressure in the reference hospital. This support was given through the night of 16th to 17th September.</li> <li>- As requested by the competent authority, the transport of 3 firefighters' dead bodies from the burnt area to Coimbra Legal Medicine Institute, using the fully equipped and certified vehicle (4 bodies capacity) that Coimbra Local branch manages.</li> <li>- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in crises deployments of 3 psychologists to support firefighters corporations' members and the affected population.</li> <li>- MHPSS needs assessment in field for medium and long-term (recovery) response.</li> </ul> <p>So far, 78 volunteers were involved in the response.</p>
<p><b>Water, Sanitation And Hygiene</b></p>	<p>Actions are being taken in WASH response, based on pre-positioned stock in National Warehouse (Coimbra), sent to the Local Branches involved in the response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribution of water bottles;</li> <li>- Distribution of hygiene kits for woman, man and babies for 24hours;</li> <li>- Distribution of hygiene kits for woman, man and babies for 72hours.</li> </ul> <p>The water bottles and the 647 hygiene kits for 24 hours have the purpose of being distributed to the civil protection agents on ground and the people who were evacuated from their homes, but aren't referred to an emergency shelter.</p> <p>The remaining hygiene kits for 72hours are meant to be distributes in the emergency shelter areas, also through volunteers of the Local Branches.</p>
<p><b>Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery</b></p>	<p>In consequence of the fires, many houses and nursing homes were evacuated in emergencies, in coordination with the National/Local Social Services and the National Guard. Taking this into account, the PRC was requested by Civil Protection Authorities to mobilize multiple transport vehicles to support these situations, to the different Command Posts of the active fires.</p> <p>So far the response includes 51 transports to safe places or emergency shelters (mostly from nursing homes), counting 1-3 in each transport. So far, 32 volunteers were involved.</p> <p>As for the food and hygiene kits, the National Warehouse had pre-positioned stock of 170 first aid kits (containing, saline solution, band-aids, masks, termal water, topical emulsion relief of muscular pain, compresses and adhesive). With the same criteria used in the food kits, those were distributed by Local Branches to the civil protection officers (mostly firefighters) and the population in the fire fronts.</p>
<p><b>Coordination</b></p>	<p>The PRC operates in close coordination with national, regional, and local governmental authorities. Additionally, at all levels, it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports the National Emergency Institute by deploying resources, including Basic Life Support ambulances and Advanced Life Support personnel and equipment, whenever requested.</li> <li>- Assists the National Guard and government social services with emergency evacuation transportation.</li> <li>- Supports the emergency shelter response with Civil Protection Authorities and Government Social Services whenever needed.</li> <li>- Provides support to the National Institute of Legal Medicine for the transportation of human remains to designated locations.</li> <li>- Coordinates with civil protection authorities the activation of the National Disaster Response Team of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to support fire monitoring and mapping.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p>From 15 September, both Disaster Management Headquarters team and Local branches started to monitor the progress of the emergency, coordinated through the EOC. The first 24h information was mostly collected in command posts by RC the (so far, #15) liaison officers, which allowed the Red Cross to quickly adjust the position and mission</p>



	<p>of the first responders teams.</p> <p>Also, Regional Emergency and Local Branches Coordinators were deployed to support their teams in field and assess shelter, livelihoods, WASH and MHPSS related needs within those in the front line.</p> <p>The Emergency Needs Assessment of the affected population at medium-long term MHPSS and livelihoods needs started 48h after the disaster strikes, continuing at the moment of the publication of this report.</p>
<b>National Society EOC</b>	<p>The PRC operates an Emergency Operations Center (EOC), available 24/7, 365 days a year. On September 15th, the EOC continued its regular operations but was additionally reinforced by PRC staff to manage the disaster, managing and coordinating Red Cross emergency response efforts nationwide.</p> <p>The key functions in this response have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinating resources: Deploying personnel, equipment, and other resources to the affected areas.</li> <li>- Communication: Facilitating internal communication and with the involved entities.</li> <li>- Monitoring: Tracking real-time information on the wildfires, such as weather conditions, damage reports, and civil protection authorities' official communications.</li> <li>- Decision-making: Space for the Disaster Management team to make critical decisions.</li> <li>- Situation analysis: Analyzing data and forecasting the development of the emergency to adapt the response.</li> </ul>

## IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

<b>Secretariat</b>	IFRC has no presence in country. Direct support has been provided since the start of the emergency by the IFRC Europe Regional Office DREF Focal Point for the development of this DREF request.
<b>Participating National Societies</b>	There are no PNSs in country.

## ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

No presence of ICRC in country.
---------------------------------

## Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

<b>Government has requested international assistance</b>	Yes
<b>National authorities</b>	<p>The national authorities' actions in response to the fires of September 2024 have been wide-ranging and multidimensional. The Portuguese government, coordinated by the National Emergency and Civil Protection Authority (ANEPC), took immediate and long-term contingency measures to support the affected populations.</p> <p>Mobilisation of more than 37,772 operatives and 827 air missions, with resources provided by the European Civil Protection Mechanism and technical support from various countries.</p> <p>The government also declared a State of Calamity in the most affected regions, such as Aveiro, Viseu, Coimbra, Braga, Porto and Castelo Branco, with a focus on controlling the fires and evacuating the population.</p>



To minimise the socio-economic impacts, financial and social support measures have been launched for affected families, including the recovery of destroyed homes and monetary support for immediate needs.

Special support was provided for farmers, whose production and machinery suffered serious damage, and for local businesses, with credit lines and European funds to facilitate recovery.

In addition, the government has implemented environmental rehabilitation programmes, including the recovery of damaged forests and infrastructure, and extraordinary support for municipalities to rebuild essential public infrastructure.

**UN or other actors**

International actors, particularly through the European Civil Protection Mechanism, have played a significant role in supporting Portuguese National Authorities efforts to combat the fires.

The European Commission quickly mobilized eight firefighting aircraft from Spain, France, Italy, and Greece to provide aerial firefighting support. These aircraft, part of the RESCEU, were critical in addressing the most intense fire outbreaks, particularly in the northern and central regions of Portugal.

Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) has been working alongside the Portuguese authorities to monitor the situation and offer continuous logistical and operational support. Furthermore, the Copernicus Satellite System has been activated to provide real-time mapping and data, assisting local authorities in making strategic firefighting decisions.

**Are there major coordination mechanism in place?**

Portugal's wildfire response is coordinated through several key mechanisms:

- Nationally, the National Civil Protection Authority leads efforts, working with local municipalities, the PRC, and security forces like the National Guard to manage evacuations and provide immediate relief.
- Internationally, the European Civil Protection Mechanism has mobilized RescEU firefighting aircraft and is providing Copernicus satellite data for real-time fire monitoring.

These mechanisms ensure coordinated firefighting, resource sharing, and relief efforts across national and international levels, supporting both immediate response and long-term recovery.

# Needs (Gaps) Identified

## Shelter Housing And Settlements

These fires have seriously affected living conditions in the districts of Aveiro, Viseu, Coimbra, Braga, Porto and Castelo Branco, with more than 70 homes destroyed or damaged.

This situation has left many families homeless and in vulnerable conditions, creating an immediate need for temporary shelters and long-term housing solutions. Furthermore, as families return to their properties to protect their belongings from theft and begin rebuilding their homes, it becomes vital to support this recovery process.

Temporary Emergency Shelter centers settled up or pre-positioned are not occupied in full capacity and so far appear to be well fitted into the population needs.

Given the seriousness of the situation, financial support will be crucial for families affected by the fires to support the recovery of essential household goods and to cover the costs associated with rebuilding their homes. This type of support allows families to access basic resources and begin the process of cleaning and rebuilding their properties, promoting their safety and security.





## Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Taking into account the homeless families and consequent need for the government to integrate them into long-term housing solutions, it is essential to provide them with financial support to cover essential expenses such as paying for water, gas and electricity bills. These families are facing a significant disruption to their daily lives and by easing the financial burden related to basic utilities, it is ensured that they can focus on recovery without facing further economic instability.

Support will be crucial not only for families directly affected by the fires, but also for those who have suffered indirect impacts, such as the loss of livelihoods, farmland and local infrastructure. Therefore, the overall response to this emergency must include both immediate monetary assistance and resilient housing solutions that allow for an effective and sustainable recovery.

Food kits have all been distributed by the Local Branches, but other institutions, companies and private donors have been also providing direct support to the population in this area, reason why its clear that is not a gap.



## Health

Several firefighters and directly affected community members are reported to have been injured due to debris or are at high risk of intoxication by smoke inhalation or burns while responding on the front lines of the fires.

Taking this into consideration, the Portuguese Red Cross mobilized Basic Life Support Ambulances to the Command Posts of the fires to ensure a quick and targeted medical response, without overburdening the National Emergency Medical Response System (112 Line).

Although this was a quick response, the Emergency Operations Room received reports from Liaison Officers indicating that, within the first 48 hours, there were significant delays in providing Basic Life Support assistance due to an overwhelming number of simultaneous requests. However, mitigation measures were implemented during this time, prioritizing clinical cases through established Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) and Institutionalized Protocols, which involved medical doctors analyzing each situation.

Furthermore, Aveiro district was one of the most affected and to prevent an overload of the District Hospital, the Local Health Service requested the Red Cross to provide support in an existing Basic Emergency Service (Águeda). The hospital wasn't able to guarantee a medical team. Thus, PRC was requested to support with 6 Human Resources (3 medical doctors) and equipment for advanced life support. The Portuguese Red Cross deployed immediately the HR and one trailer with the equipment.

On 17 September, three firefighters were reported dead due to major burns. The Portuguese Red Cross was requested by the authorities to transport these bodies to autopsy in Coimbra Legal Medical Institute. Coimbra Local Branch has a fully equipped and certified vehicle (with room for four bodies) and team, which provide this service, as requested.

The medium and long term response on clinical areas are covered by the National Health System, which is free for vulnerable and people targeted as needed by the National Social Services.

In terms of psychological support in emergencies and catastrophes, request for assistance is often activated by the National Emergency Institute (INEM), the National Health Service's (SNS) response when it faces limitations or lack of resources, such as the lack of psychologists to respond to the needs of the populations affected by fires. PRC complements the public health system by providing immediate and ongoing psychological support following crises such as fires.

Considering the initial Needs Assessment carried out by the PRC in conjunction with the Local Health Units of the affected municipalities, PRC plans to implement a psychological support program (MHPSS) for 850 people, representing 10% of the affected population, since it is estimated that between 5% and 10% of those affected develop severe trauma in crisis situations.

This intervention is essential in the medium and long term, not only to cope with the traumatic experience resulting from the loss of property, livelihoods and security, but also to support the process of rebuilding lives.



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

During the fire, both communities and civil protection officers are facing a range of urgent needs beyond the immediate threat of fire itself. One critical area of concern is access to clean water and hygiene supplies, both of which are essential to safeguarding public health during this type of emergency.



These fires occurred in hot, dry conditions, which increased the risk of dehydration, especially for responders and affected community members. Access to clean drinking water is vital to maintaining hydration and preventing heat-related illnesses. The Portuguese Red Cross was one of many entities (both private and corporate) distributing water to the population and firefighters on the front lines. For this reason, there are no reports of gaps in this response, as there was fortunately significant support from various sources.

Furthermore, in this response, many firefighters were far away from their homes (some from the south regions of the country), for a significant number of hours, also leaving with short time of preparation. In fire-affected areas and in the front line of the fire, access to proper sanitation facilities can be compromised, increasing the risk of infectious disease. Also, exposure to ash and smoke can irritate the skin, eyes, and respiratory system.

The Local Branches have been distributing water and 24-hour hygiene kits, with no stock shortages reported. Since there is no additional stock available in the National Warehouse, internal monitoring and coordination mechanisms will ensure effective stock rotations for optimal distribution. Additionally, 72-hour hygiene kits have been distributed to individuals and families who have been evacuated from their homes due to the wildfire, especially those in temporary emergency shelters and residents whose homes have been damaged or destroyed by the fire, as they may lack access to basic hygiene items.



## Community Engagement And Accountability

Based on the initial needs assessment, the PRC identified that the lack of clear communication and community participation limited the effectiveness of the interventions. The lack of clear information about the services and support available led to confusion and difficulties in accessing assistance. The lack of active community consultation and feedback channels impeded the adaptation of interventions to real needs. In addition, the lack of transparency contributed to distrust in authorities and emergency response organizations, undermining the effectiveness of coordination and emergency management.

The minimum implementation of CEA actions is essential to ensure that affected communities are involved in decisions about their needs, guaranteeing effective interventions that are culturally appropriate.

Engaging the local population makes it possible to identify specific challenges and develop more sustainable solutions. In addition, coordination with local authorities avoids duplication of efforts, improves transparency and promotes mutual responsibility.

### Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

A limitation to the assessment is coordination required between the PRC and the government Social Services to properly identify the most vulnerable families and conduct a support plan addressing each family the specific needs. The limited availability of local authorities, due to the urgency of the situation, has been slowing down the process, aggravated by delay in the transmission of official information.

To mitigate these challenges, the PRC has initiated contacts with the Local Social Welfare Centers (CLAS's) present in the affected municipalities, in order to increase coordination with local authorities and improve communication channels.

The Psychosocial Support Teams of the Local Branches of the affected Municipalities have been involved, and the Team is currently carrying out a more robust Needs Assessment. In coordination with the local government's Psychosocial Intervention Technicians.

## Operational Strategy

### Overall objective of the operation

This DREF allocation aims at supporting 2,197 of people in need affected by the fires in Portugal in September 2024, by providing shelter, livelihoods, multi-purpose cash grants, health, WASH and risk reduction related activities in the regions of Aveiro, Castelo Branco, Coimbra, Viseu, Porto e Braga for a period of 6 months.

### Operation strategy rationale

To address the needs of the targeted population, this DREF aims at supporting the population in need through coordinated mobilizations and interventions with the request from the competent authorities including: temporary emergency shelter, basic and advanced life support, evacuations, liaison officers, UAV teams and MHPSS in Crisis Support.



It is worth noting that this DREF intervention has been designed based on the information obtained during initial needs assessment, which may not fully capture the extent of damage or impact. Once detailed assessments are completed, the results will guide any necessary scaling up of the response, if necessary.

For now, the rationale behind the proposed intervention includes:

#### SHELTER:

Through this sector of intervention, at least 100 people will be reached with the distribution of basic supplies, including clothing and blankets, to address their immediate needs. These will be provided to people in temporary emergency shelters, either from the government or the Red Cross.

#### LIVELIHOODS:

At least 4 families (12 people, considering 3 members per family) will be reached through a financial assistance program that will be implemented to cover utility costs of families displaced by the forest fires whom have been relocated to temporary accommodations by local authorities. This financial support is crucial to ensure that these families do not face additional pressures when being resettled in temporary housing, especially at a time when their incomes have been severely affected by the loss of their homes and livelihoods.

The program aims to cover electricity (EUR 20 per person), water (EUR 15 per person) and gas (EUR 15 per person) for a period of 6 months (total of EUR 900 per family) with payment directly managed by Psychosocial Teams from the PRC Local Branches.

This support will be provided after a detailed social diagnosis carried out by the Psychological Teams from the PRC Local Branches, in coordination with the local authorities and Municipal Services, which will identify the people most in need of this support.

- Additionally, 515 food kits, consisting of energy bars, fruit pulp and biscuits, have already been distributed for firefighters and people affected by the fires. This operation provides funding for the replenishment of these kits to ensure the continuity of food support for these populations. These kits provide an immediate source of nutrition, crucial in the early stages of resettlement and recovery.

#### MULTIPURPOSE CASH:

At least 20 families (60 people) will be reached through a Multipurpose Cash Transfer program aimed at supporting the most vulnerable people affected by the fires, helping them to cover basic needs for a period of 6 months. This program aims to ease the financial burden on families who have lost their homes and who depend on agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihoods, guaranteeing the continuity of their economic activities.

For this, a payment card will be provided that can be used in shops to buy essential foodstuffs. The calculation is done with a value of €50 per month per person and an additional €25 for minors in the household. Considering 3 members per household and one minor, the total amounts to €175 per month, or €1,050 for the six months.

The selection of the 20 families for the Multipurpose Cash Transfer program will be comprised in coordination with the Municipal Social Services (CLAS) of the affected areas. These families were previously identified during the collection of needs, based on the total/partial loss of housing. The selection will not be inflated, ensuring that families who have already requested support from PRC are properly assisted.

It is worth highlighting that the Portuguese Red Cross already has a cash advance program ("Cartão Dá") already in place for social support. The Financial Service Provider is already a stakeholder for this sector for the National Society and is fully operational, ensuring that cash transfers are securely and efficiently delivered to the beneficiaries.

#### HEALTH:

At least 80 people will be assisted through the implementation of health actions aimed at personnel in the field and people affected by the fire emergency, including:

- Mobilization of basic life support ambulances and first aid assistance to support the wildfire response in coordination with Governmental Authorities. These services are designed to address urgent medical needs that are not life-threatening but require prompt attention such as immediate medical care, basic diagnostics and first aid treatment for minor injuries, bruises etc.

These resources were initially deployed to the Command Posts in the fire-affected areas, based on the number of firefighters on the ground and the direct risk to the population. It is important to note that the mobilized ambulances are in addition to the 112 system, and the Red Cross has ensured its regular daily response within this system, as expected.

- Transport of deceased individuals, equipped with the necessary tools and proper training, validated by the Legal Medicine Institute. In the Central Region of the country, this is a well-known service, but the capacity is reinforced whenever a need is identified during a disaster. This led the PRC to fill the gap by transporting three deceased firefighters from the disaster area to the Legal Medicine Institute in Coimbra.



It is worth highlighting that in 2022, the Portuguese Red Cross (PRC) increased for the first time the diversity of its health response in support of health authorities in the Center Region of the Country. This progress is a result of improved coordination with Health Authorities, a relationship that is being strengthened over time. In this disaster response, the Local Health Service requested the Red Cross to provide Águeda Basic Emergency Center with three medical doctors, and advanced life support equipment.

#### WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

At least 774 people will be reached with the distribution of hygiene kits to allow them to clean off ash residue, protect their skin, and care for minor injuries sustained during evacuation or recovery efforts.

The Portuguese Red Cross distributed 24-hour hygiene kits to civil protection officers and the population on the fire front, and 72-hour hygiene kits to people in temporary emergency shelters, both cases with focus on the exposed to large amounts of smoke, ash, and debris. Hygiene kits mainly contain soap, sanitizer, wipes, and other essentials help maintain cleanliness and reduce the risk of illnesses like respiratory infections, skin conditions, and gastrointestinal diseases.

This DREF is proposed to make replenishment of all the referred items.

#### MHPSS:

Through this sector of intervention, 865 people will be reached with the aim of addressing the psychological impact from the loss of property, livelihoods, and security as a result of the fires, while supporting the recovery and rebuilding of lives.

The PRC will implement a comprehensive intervention to address the immediate and long-term psychological needs of populations affected by this emergency. The proposed strategy aims to fill the gaps in the SNS, offering structured support in areas with insufficient mental health services. This strategic approach ensures that interventions are both individualized and community-based, helping to rebuild resilience and promote long-term recovery.

The intervention will include two key methodologies:

- Psychological Intervention in Crisis and Disaster: Activated by the INEM when the SNS is overwhelmed, this team of crisis psychologists provides immediate emotional support, psychological stabilization, and referrals for further care. During the fires, 15 individuals were supported through Psychological First Aid (PFA), addressing acute stress reactions and preventing long-term complications like PTSD.

- Ongoing Mental Health Program: Targeting people who need continued psychological support, this program focuses on group interventions and individual support. It will be implemented in coordination with Local Health Units, addressing the 10% of the affected population (850 people) who may develop major trauma. The program will be delivered by two psychologists, for 6 months, ensuring close collaboration with health services to identify those in need and implement sustained interventions.

Priority will be given to intervention with First Responders, as these professionals are the most affected by these events

#### RISK REDUCTION, CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RECOVERY

Firefighters and the affected population needed first aid kits for several crucial reasons, given the hazardous and unpredictable nature of their work. These are provided for: immediate treatment of injuries, stabilization until medical help arrives, self-care in remote or hard-to-reach areas, assist other people in remote areas during fires, or in locations where immediate medical help is not available.

In summary, first aid kits are a critical tool for to manage injuries, provide care to others, and maintain own health and safety while being in dangerous environments. These first aid kits were distributed together with hygiene and food kits, having the same strategy, remote areas and people most at risk of being injured.

This DREF is proposed to make replenishment of all the first aid kits.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) strategy will focus on community feedback mechanisms, including post-distribution monitoring surveys and focus group meetings, with the people directly beneficiary from the Program. In coordination with relevant authorities, the PRC will ensure timely sharing of clear information about the response, selection criteria, and distribution processes with affected communities. This will be particularly important for cash-based interventions.

Flyers with detailed information about money transfers will be distributed. Community meetings will ensure that the intervention meets Sphere Standards and prioritizes vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

PRC will also implement exit surveys to gather feedback on service delivery and ensure community voices are heard in lessons learned workshops.



# Targeting Strategy

## Who will be targeted through this operation?

This DREF operation will target a total of 2,197 individuals across the most affected regions, based on needs assessments and real data collected during the initial phases of the emergency response.

To summarize the total targeted population for each service is:

- Shelter assistance: 100 people
- Hygiene kits: 774 people (sum of 24h and 72h kits);
- Food kits: 515 people
- Water bottles: 790 people
- First aid kits: 170 people
- Basic Life Support Assistances: 80 people
- Emergency Evacuation: 102 transports of an average of 3 people per Household (HH) - total of 306 people
- MHPSS in crisis support (during response): 15 people
- MHPSS medium term recovery program: 850 people (2,1% of the total affected population). CEA activities will also be implemented with individuals supported by this program.
- Cash assistance program: 20 families on an average of 3 people per Household (HH) - total of 60 people
- Payment of utilities' bills: 4 families on an average of 3 people per Household (HH) - total of 12 people

It is considered that the first aid kits, food kits and water bottles are distributed for the same group of people. This rationale makes the total targeted people for this project, meaning people reached with 1 single service being 2197, of a total of 2782 services provided.

## Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The selection criteria for the targeted population in this DREF, are based on real-time data collection and needs assessments conducted in the field. The key factor driving the selection is ensuring that those with the most urgent and verified needs are prioritized for support.

The first criterion focuses on families who experienced total/partial housing loss. These families, identified during the initial needs collection, either lost their homes completely or have homes rendered uninhabitable by the fires. As a result, 20 families (approximately 60 people) will receive Multipurpose Cash assistance, and 4 families (approximately 12 people) will have their utility bills (water, gas, and electricity) covered for a period of six months. This support aims to alleviate the financial burden on these families, with payment amounts set based on pre-agreed limits with governmental services.

Additionally, the operation support 306 people who were evacuated from their homes as a result of the fires. These individuals were displaced due to immediate danger and were provided with emergency shelter and direct assistance. Beyond this, 774 people received hygiene kits during the emergency response, and 80 individuals were identified for immediate direct assistance, selected based on their urgent need for basic survival items such as hygiene products and health-related necessities.

On the psychosocial support, the MHPSS Program will target 850 people, representing approximately 10% of the affected population. This percentage is based on estimates that between 5% and 10% of those affected by disasters develop major trauma. Already, 15 individuals have received psychological support through MHPSS, and the expanded program aims to continue this support for a larger number of people at risk of long-term mental health issues.

Vulnerability indicators, including women, children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions, have also been considered to ensure the most at-risk populations are prioritized.

Lastly, the coordination with government social services has is crucial in identifying the families most in need of cash-based interventions and utility support.



# Total Targeted Population

Women	1,018	Rural	40%
Girls (under 18)	80	Urban	60%
Men	1,019	People with disabilities (estimated)	11%
Boys (under 18)	80		
Total targeted population	2,197		

# Risk and Security Considerations

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

Risk	Mitigation action
Burnout of staff/volunteers	Definition of shift rotations in the beginning of the operation. Don't permit more than 24 hour shifts with 24hours rest in the following day.
Risk of fire burnt or intoxication	Communications system is checked frequently (radio and mobile phone), dissemination of information of safe routes from the liaison officers previous to the activations.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

No additional concerns.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No

# Planned Intervention



## Shelter Housing And Settlements

Budget: CHF 2,668

Targeted Persons: 100

### Indicators

Title	Target
# of people reached with emergency shelter	100
# of blankets replenished	100

### Priority Actions

- Provide emergency shelter for 100 affected people including the provision of 1x blanket per person.
- Replenish 10 camp beds and 10 personal boxers, taking into account material wear.





## Livelihoods And Basic Needs

**Budget:** CHF 6,182

**Targeted Persons:** 12

### Indicators

Title	Target
# of families reached with utilities program to cover basic needs for 6 months	4
# of food kits replenished	515
% of beneficiaries who report satisfaction with the timeliness and appropriateness of the assistance provided	80

### Priority Actions

- Payment of utilities (electricity, water and gas) bills for 4 families (3 people per HH) to support housing costs for 6 months
- Conduct exiting surveys and use feedback mechanisms to collect data on the effectiveness of cash assistance. This will include monitoring how families utilized the funds and whether the cash program helped meet their immediate needs
- Work closely with government social services to identify and validate families who qualify for utility bill support. Ensure that all beneficiaries are properly assessed based on real-time data and that targeting is transparent and needs-based.
- Replenishment of 515 food kits distributed to firefighters and first responders



## Multi Purpose Cash

**Budget:** CHF 21,023

**Targeted Persons:** 60

### Indicators

Title	Target
# of families reached with cash transfer program to cover basic needs for 6 months	20
# total amount of cash (CHF) disbursed per household	166
% of cash distributed relative to the total allocated	100

### Priority Actions

- Distribute cash transfers to the 20 targeted families (60 individuals) who experienced total / Partial housing loss, ensuring that the funds are distributed via the established "Cartão Dá" system.
- Work closely with government social services to identify and validate families who qualify for multipurpose cash assistance. Ensure that all beneficiaries are properly assessed based on real-time data and that targeting is transparent and needs-based.
- Conduct exit surveys and use feedback mechanisms to collect data on the effectiveness of cash assistance. This will include monitoring how families utilized the funds and whether the cash program helped meet their immediate needs.



## Health

**Budget:** CHF 38,773

**Targeted Persons:** 945



## Indicators

Title	Target
# of people assisted with Basic Life Support aid by ambulances	80
# of people receiving immediate crisis MHPSS support	15
# of people enrolled in medium to long-term MHPSS program - individuals	150
# of people to reach in medium to long-term MHPSS program - group interventions	700

## Priority Actions

- Provide Basic Life Support aid by ambulances to 80 people
- Set up Advance Life Support support into a Basic Emergency Service
- Provide safe and dignified transport of dead bodies
- Provide MHPSS support in crisis for 15 people - Psychological First Aid for those directly affected by the fires, focusing on stabilizing emotional distress and reducing immediate trauma
- Conduct a MHPSS recovery program targeting 850 individuals (10% of the population, with up to 10% projected to develop severe trauma). This program will offer individual counseling, group therapy, and community-based support.
- Hire and deploy two specialized psychologists to manage this MHPSS program for the DREF response time.

Conduct post-intervention assessments to track the progress and recovery of individuals participating in the MHPSS program. This will include follow-up surveys on psychological well-being and resilience, as well as feedback on the services received



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

**Budget:** CHF 9,439

**Targeted Persons:** 774

## Indicators

Title	Target
# of 24h baby hygiene kits distributed	150
# of 24h woman hygiene kits distributed	245
# of 24h man hygiene kits distributed	252
# of 72h adult hygiene kits distributed	117
# of 72h baby hygiene kits distributed	10

## Priority Actions

- Distribution of 647 hygiene kits for 24h to civil protection officers and the population on the fire front
- Distribution of 127 hygiene kits for 72h to emergency shelter users.



## Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

**Budget:** CHF 10,647

**Targeted Persons:** 306

## Indicators

Title	Target
# evacuation transports provided	102
# of distributed first aid kits	170

## Priority Actions

- Provide emergency evacuation transport for approx.. 306 people, taking into account 102 transports (3 people per vehicle)
- Distribution of 170 first aid kits to firefighters and population



## Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 0

Targeted Persons: 0

## Indicators

Title	Target
# distribution of flyers in the community	850
# community meetings	3

## Priority Actions

- Distribute flyers in community meetings to raise awareness about prevention - the targeted community will be the same as the MHPSS recovery medium and long-term program, reason why there are no new targeted people in this sector (as same as allocated budget)
- The three (3) meetings will be held in collaboration with the MHPSS programme.



## National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 24,738

Targeted Persons: -

## Indicators

Title	Target
# liaison officers mobilized	30
# UAV team activations	1

## Priority Actions

- Mobilization of 30 liaison officers to support in command posts
- Activation of the UAV National Disaster Response Team to monitor and map the wildfire



# About Support Services

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

So far 150 volunteers and staff have been involved in providing direct support to the population. The staff is mostly from Disaster Management Department and Coordination representatives from Local Branches, guaranteeing all coordination, emergency needs assessment and MHPSS activities.

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

Procurement will be done by the National Society taking into account IFRC Procedures. All the procurement budgeted is for replenishment.

## How will this operation be monitored?

This operation will be systematically monitored using PRC's established tools, including KOBOToolbox for data collection and Microsoft Project for financial tracking, particularly for cash transfers and utility payments, ensuring transparency and efficient use of resources, and activities planning. Field teams will utilize KOBOToolbox to collect real-time data on distribution, beneficiary satisfaction, and community feedback, ensuring timely and accurate information for decision-making.

Financial, Communications and Marketing, and Disaster Management Departments at PRC's headquarters will closely oversee the operation, with each department responsible for key areas such as budget management, communications, and overall disaster response coordination. Other departments will be engaged as necessary.

Coordination with the IFRC will involve regular meetings to review progress, discuss emerging needs, and ensure adherence to the planned objectives.

Reporting on the operation will follow IFRC's minimum reporting standards, with a final report issued within three months after the operation's conclusion. A lessons learned workshop will be conducted for the implementation team to enhance future responses.

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

The communication strategy will leverage multiple communication channels to reach diverse audiences:

1. PRC's website and social media (both institutional and disaster management accounts)

PRC will ensure regular updates of the progress of this operation on its social networks, covering all components of communities support, through impactful visual content, like images and short videos, including storytelling like testimonials from affected people and/or volunteers, and some informative posts with useful advices regarding to the recovery phase.

2. Press releases will deliver clear and concise information about the crisis and the necessary support, reaching both national and international media.

3. Additionally, a final report will be prepared for IFRC, focused on describe with complete transparency the activities carried out with the aim of recovering communities affected by the disaster, as well as the results achieved.



# Budget Overview



## DREF OPERATION

- Portuguese Red Cross  
Portugal: Wilfires

### Operating Budget

<b>Planned Operations</b>	<b>88 732</b>
Shelter and Basic Household Items	2 668
Livelihoods	6 182
Multi-purpose Cash	21 023
Health	38 773
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	9 439
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	10 647
Community Engagement and Accountability	0
Environmental Sustainability	0
<b>Enabling Approaches</b>	<b>24 738</b>
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	0
National Society Strengthening	24 738
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>113 470</b>

*all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)*

Internal

21/09/2024

#V2022.01

[Click here to download the budget file](#)



# Contact Information

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

**National Society contact:** Gonçalo Órfão, Head of Disaster Management, goncalo.orfao@cruzvermelha.org.pt, +351 913 830 101

**IFRC Appeal Manager:** Frido Herinckx, Manager, Operations Coordination, frido.herinckx@ifrc.org

**IFRC Project Manager:** Aleksandar Panic, Coordinator, Operations, aleksandar.panic@ifrc.org

**IFRC focal point for the emergency:** Aleksandar Panic, Coordinator, Operations, aleksandar.panic@ifrc.org

[Click here for the reference](#)

